MARVEL COMICS
WHAT IF...™
the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®
HAD MARRIED THE BLACK CAT?™
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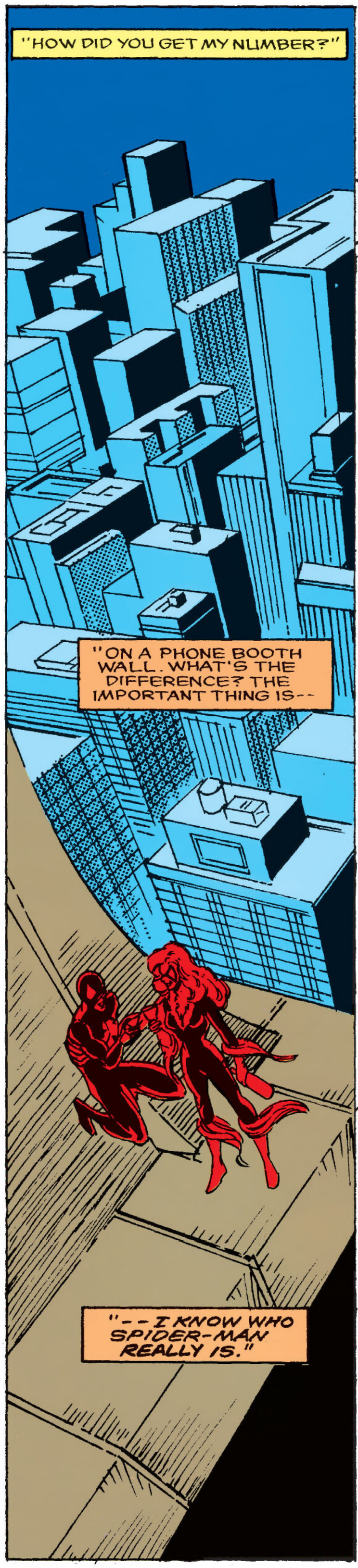
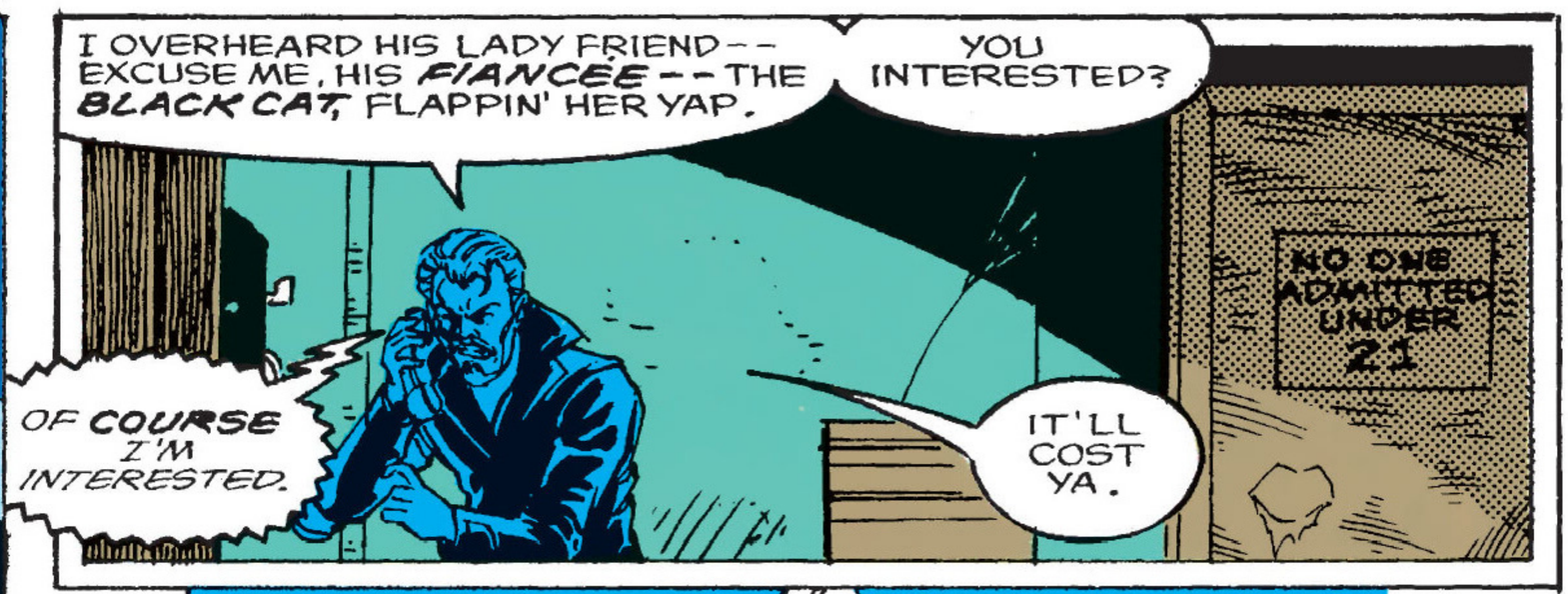
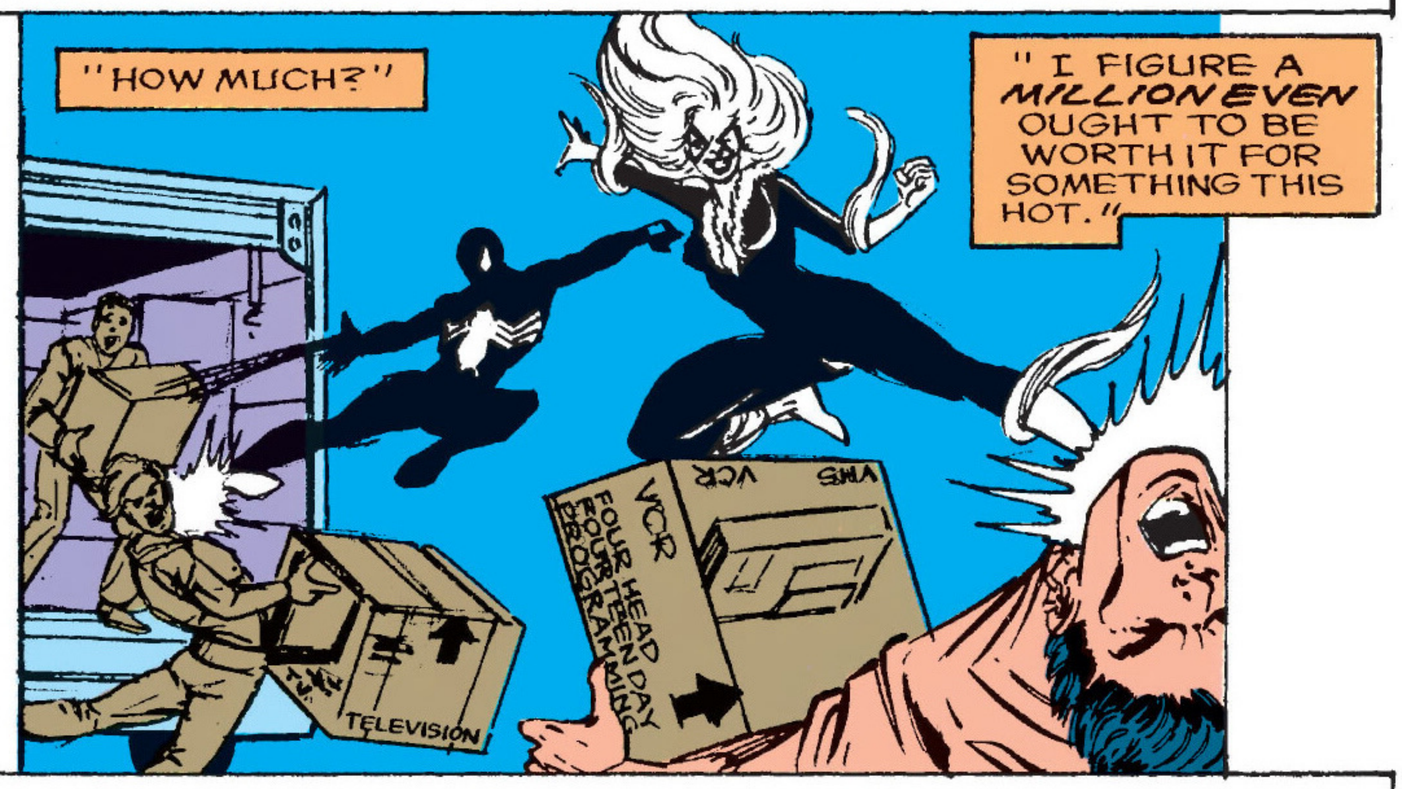
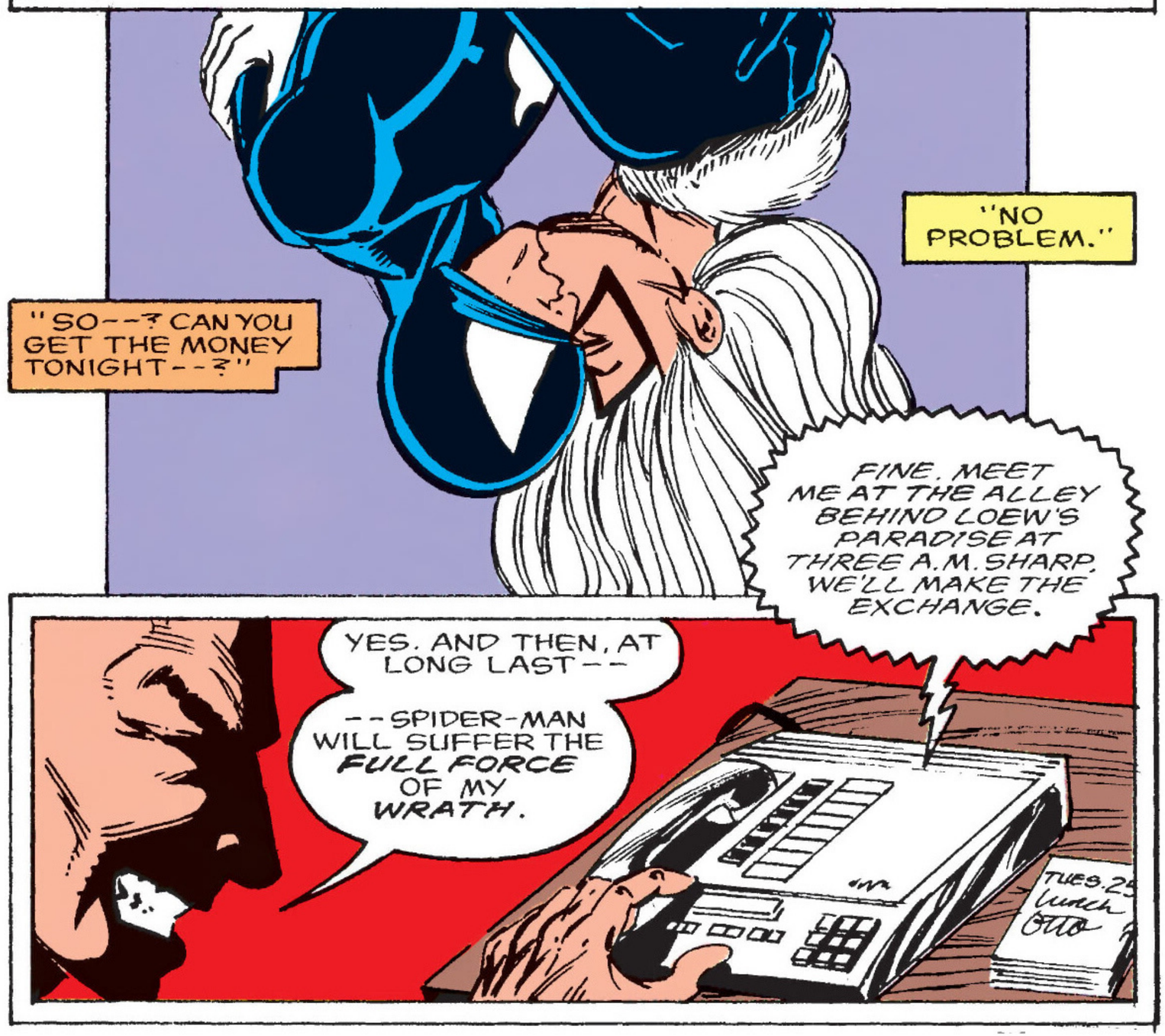
$1.25 US
$1.75 CAN
21
JAN
CC 02920
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
JIM. BOND & BOB


"HOW DID YOU GET MY NUMBER?"
"ON A PHONE BOOTH WALL. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? THE IMPORTANT THING IS--
"--I KNOW WHO SPIDER-MAN REALLY IS."


I OVERHEARD HIS LADY FRIEND-- EXCUSE ME, HIS FIANCEE--THE BLACK CAT, FLAPPIN' HER YAP.
YOU INTERESTED?
OF COURSE I'M INTERESTED.
IT'LL COST YA.
NO ONE ADMITTED UNDER 21


"HOW MUCH?"
"I FIGURE A MILLION EVEN OUGHT TO BE WORTH IT FOR SOMETHING THIS HOT."
TELEVISION
VCR
VCR
VMS
VMS

HOW DO I KNOW THE INFORMATION'S ACCURATE?
YOU'VE GOT TOO GOOD A REP. YOU ALMOST KILLED THE WEB-SPINNER A FEW TIMES. YOU I WON'T MESS WITH.
NO, I'M SURE YOU WOULDN'T.


"SO--? CAN YOU GET THE MONEY TONIGHT--?"
"NO PROBLEM."
FINE. MEET ME AT THE ALLEY BEHIND LOEW'S PARADISE AT THREE A.M. SHARP. WE'LL MAKE THE EXCHANGE.
YES. AND THEN, AT LONG LAST--
--SPIDER-MAN WILL SUFFER THE FULL FORCE OF MY WRATH.

NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK.

Niagara WEDD CHAP

...AND DO YOU, *PETER PALMER*, TAKE *FELINA HARVEY* TO BE YOUR LAWFUL WEDDED WIFE...?

I DO. I SURE *DO*.

THEN, I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU *MAN* AND *WIFE*.

HOPE YOU KIDS LIKE *MANTOVANI*...

THUS, UNDER ASSUMED NAMES, *SPIDER-MAN* AND THE *BLACK CAT* PLEDGE THEIR TROTHS IN MARRIAGE.

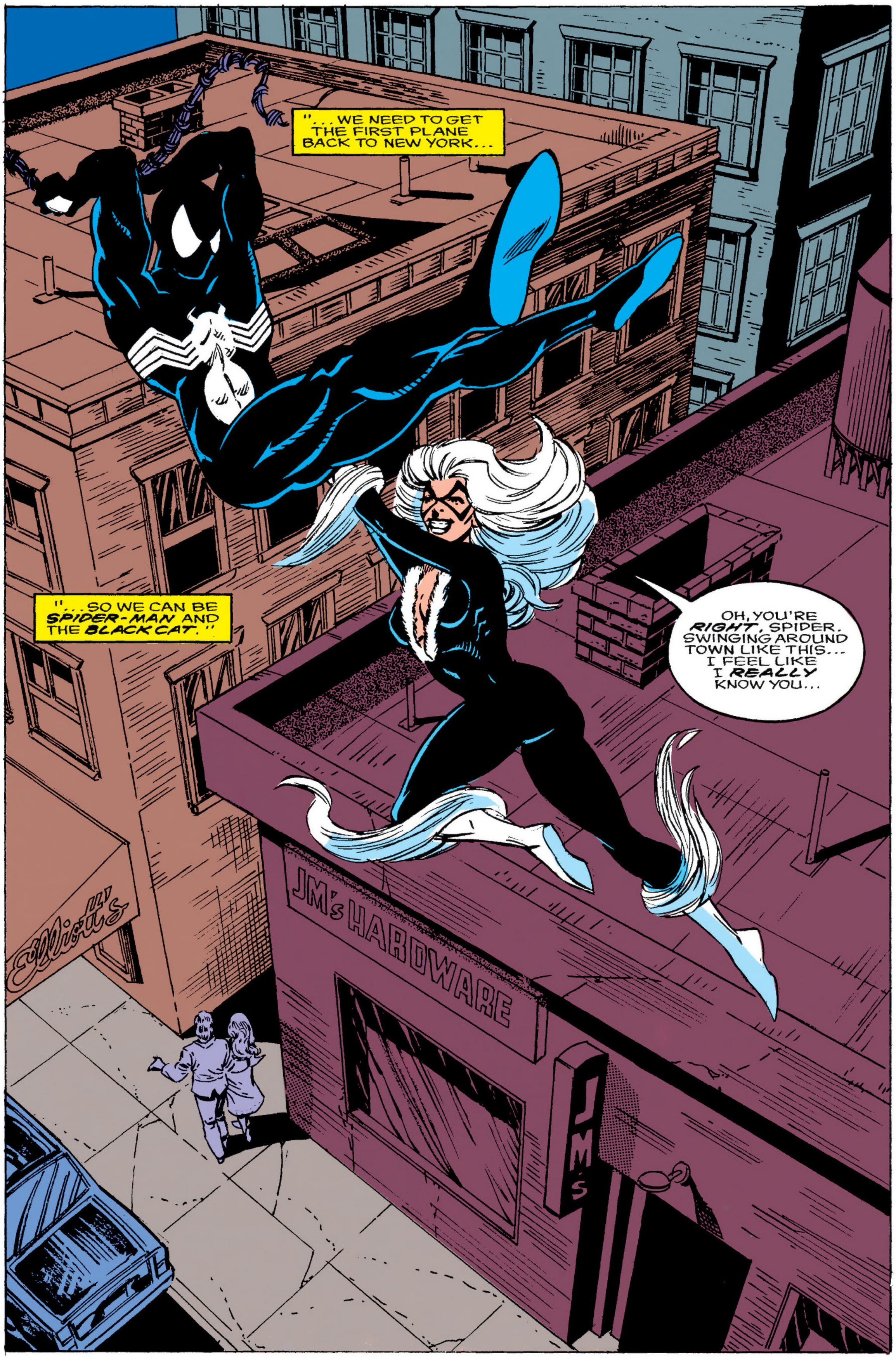
BUT, THAT NIGHT...

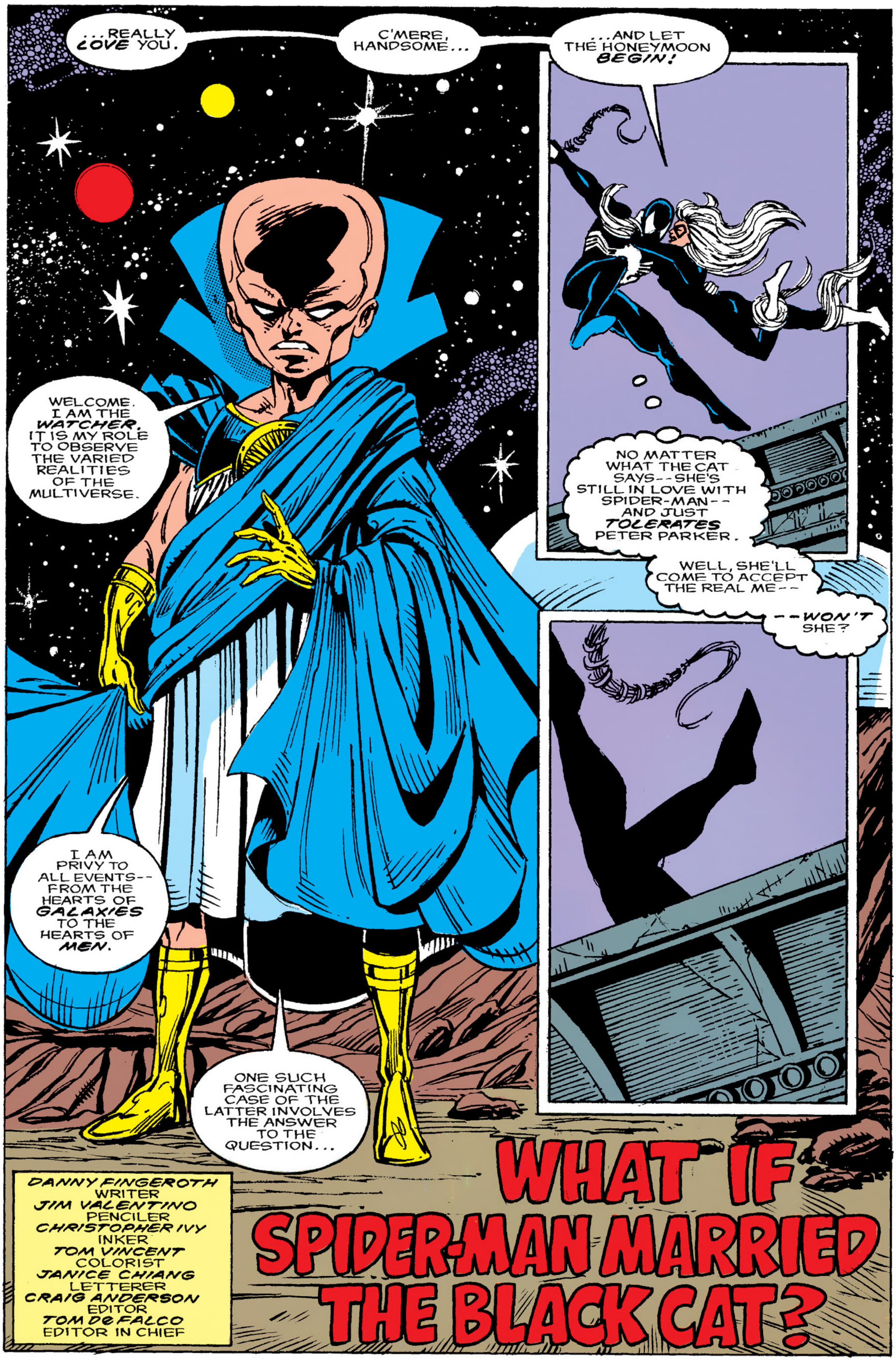
WHAT'S *WRONG*, FELICIA?

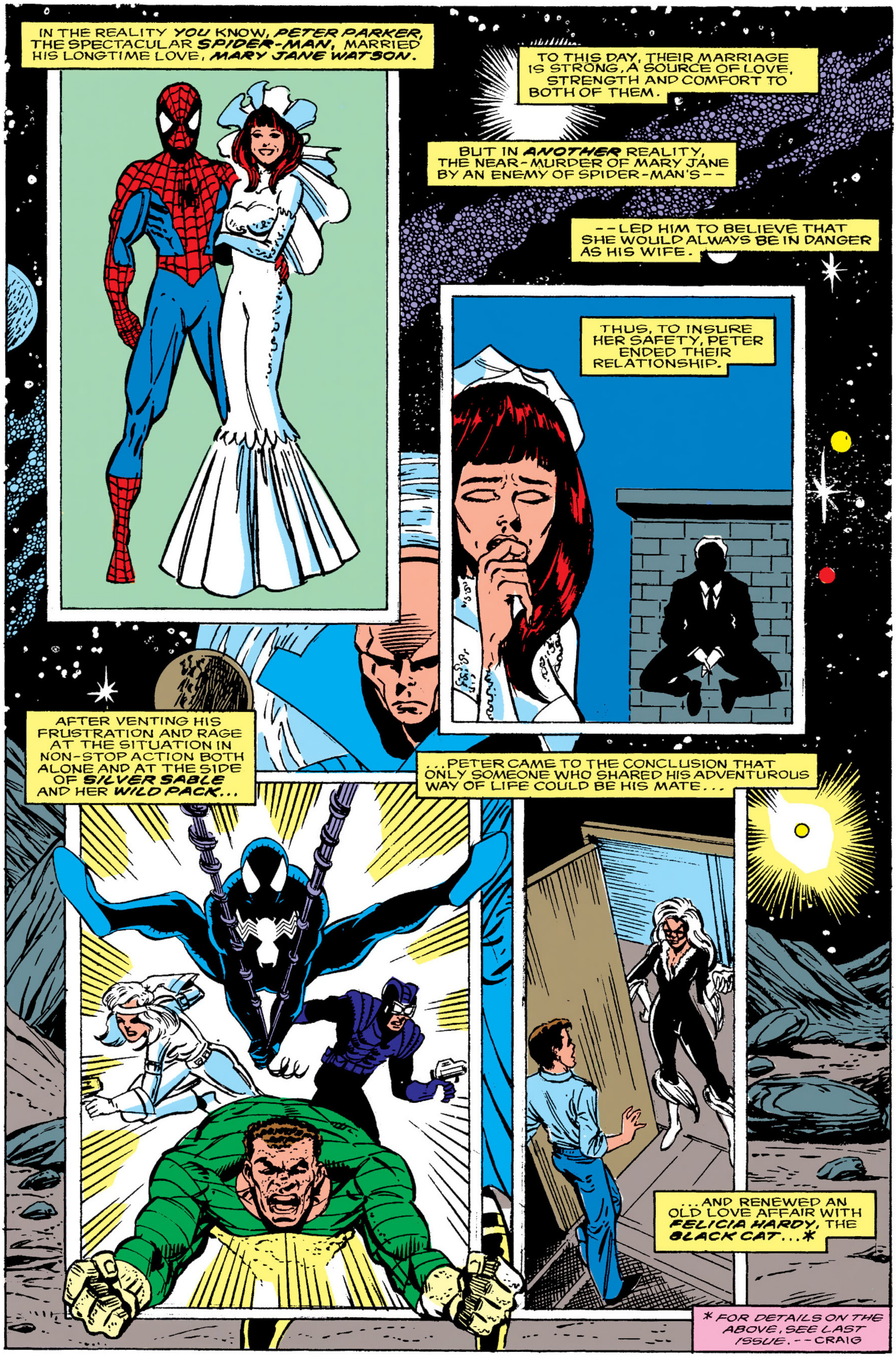
N-NOTHING, SPIDER. I...I JUST NEED TO GET IN THE MOOD...

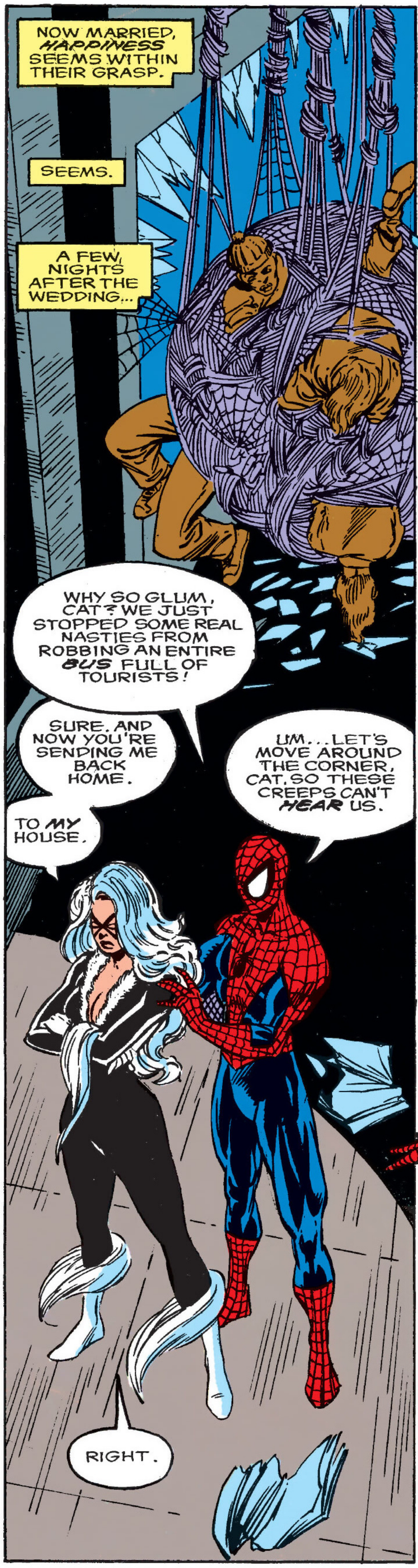
IN THE--?

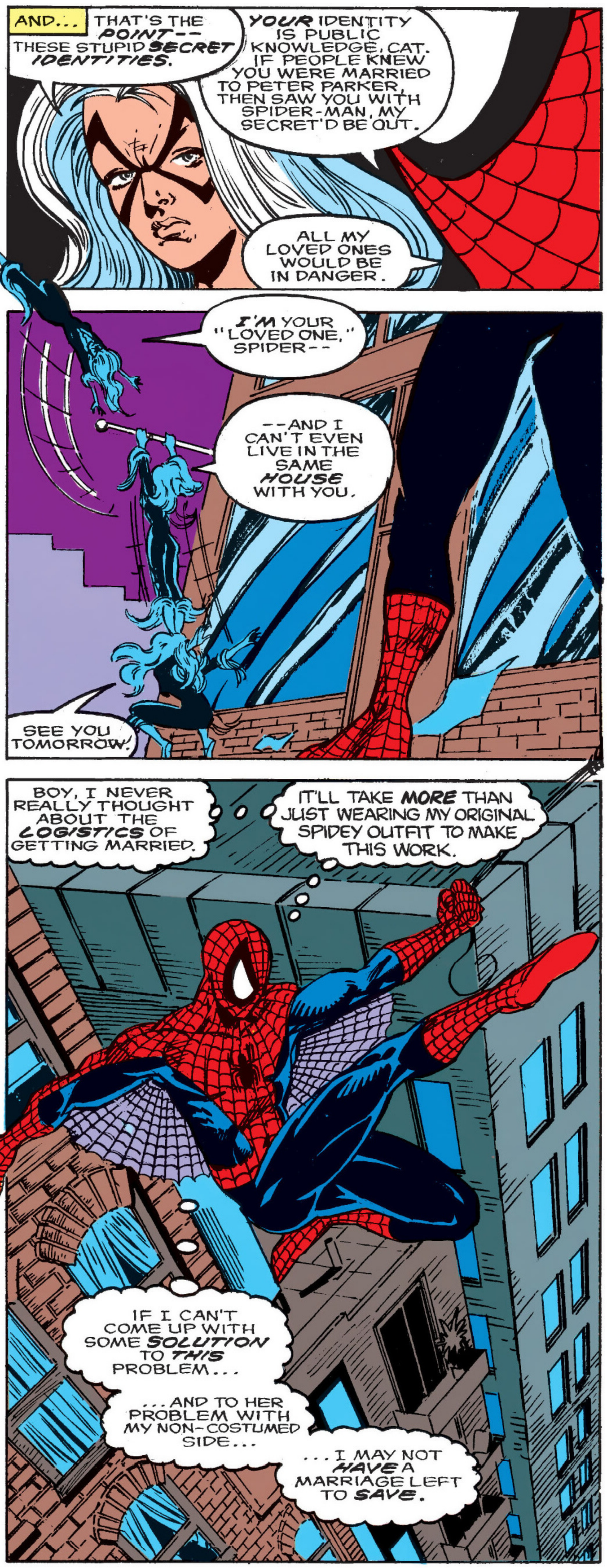
HEY--I KNOW *JUST* WHAT YOU NEED...

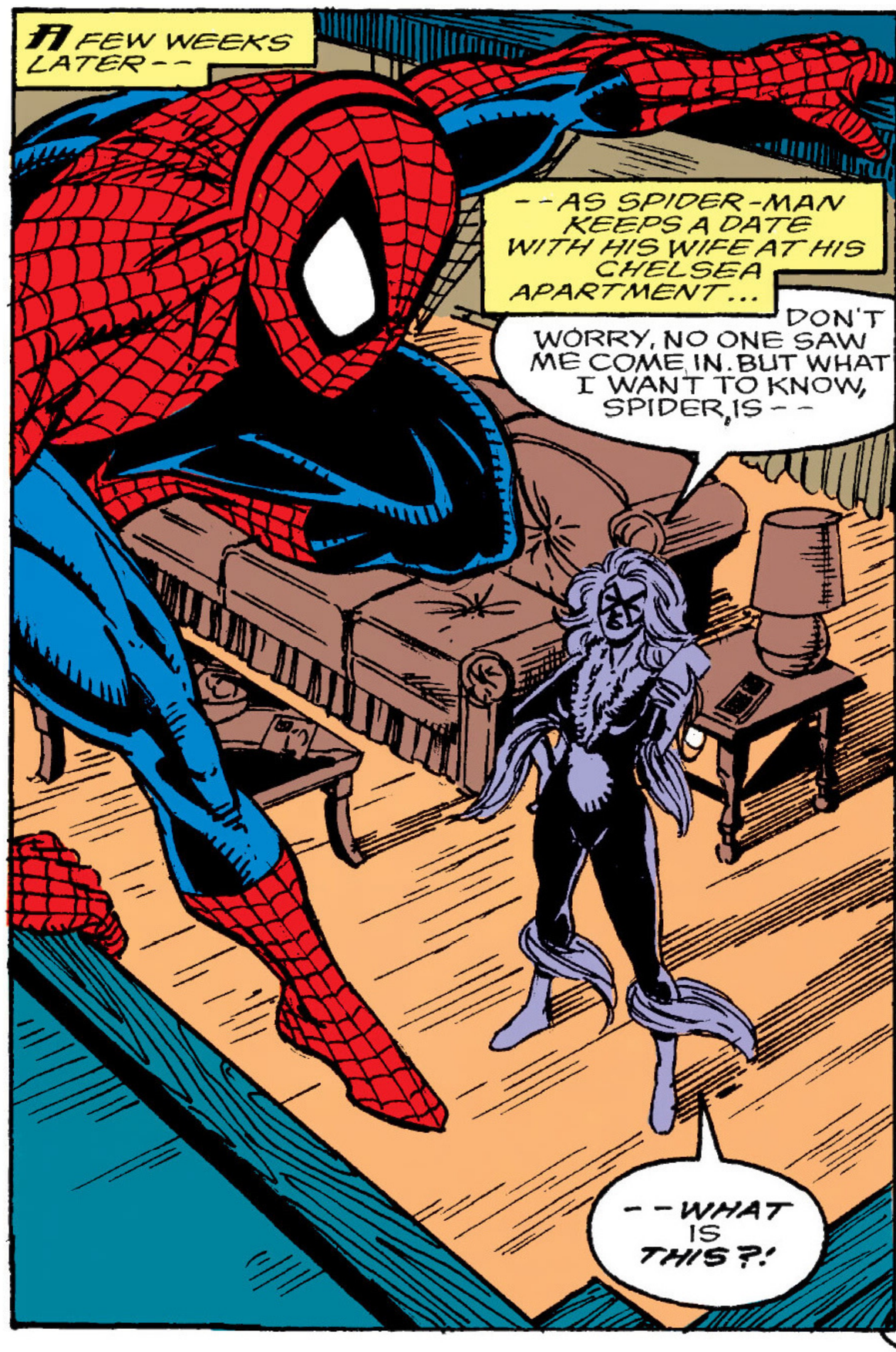

"...WE NEED TO GET THE FIRST PLANE BACK TO NEW YORK...
"...SO WE CAN BE SPIDER-MAN AND THE BLACK CAT."
OH, YOU'RE RIGHT, SPIDER. SWINGING AROUND TOWN LIKE THIS... I FEEL LIKE I REALLY KNOW YOU...
JM'S HARDWARE
JM'S


...REALLY LOVE YOU.
C'MERE, HANDSOME...
...AND LET THE HONEYMOON BEGIN!
WELCOME. I AM THE WATCHER. IT IS MY ROLE TO OBSERVE THE VARIED REALITIES OF THE MULTIVERSE.
NO MATTER WHAT THE CAT SAYS--SHE'S STILL IN LOVE WITH SPIDER-MAN--AND JUST TOLERATES PETER PARKER.
WELL, SHE'LL COME TO ACCEPT THE REAL ME--
--WON'T SHE?
I AM PRIVY TO ALL EVENTS--FROM THE HEARTS OF GALAXIES TO THE HEARTS OF MEN.
ONE SUCH FASCINATING CASE OF THE LATTER INVOLVES THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION...
DANNY FINGEROTH WRITER
JIM VALENTINO PENCILER
CHRISTOPHER IVY INKER
TOM VINCENT COLORIST
JANICE CHIANG LETTERER
CRAIG ANDERSON EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF
WHAT IF SPIDER-MAN MARRIED THE BLACK CAT?


IN THE REALITY YOU KNOW, PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, MARRIED HIS LONGTIME LOVE, MARY JANE WATSON.
TO THIS DAY, THEIR MARRIAGE IS STRONG, A SOURCE OF LOVE, STRENGTH AND COMFORT TO BOTH OF THEM.
BUT IN ANOTHER REALITY, THE NEAR-MURDER OF MARY JANE BY AN ENEMY OF SPIDER-MAN'S--
--LED HIM TO BELIEVE THAT SHE WOULD ALWAYS BE IN DANGER AS HIS WIFE.
THUS, TO INSURE HER SAFETY, PETER ENDED THEIR RELATIONSHIP.
AFTER VENTING HIS FRUSTRATION AND RAGE AT THE SITUATION IN NON-STOP ACTION BOTH ALONE AND AT THE SIDE OF SILVER SABLE AND HER WILD PACK...
...PETER CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT ONLY SOMEONE WHO SHARED HIS ADVENTUROUS WAY OF LIFE COULD BE HIS MATE...
...AND RENEWED AN OLD LOVE AFFAIR WITH FELICIA HARDY, THE BLACK CAT...*
* FOR DETAILS ON THE ABOVE, SEE LAST ISSUE. --CRAIG


NOW MARRIED, HAPPINESS SEEMS WITHIN THEIR GRASP.
SEEMS.
A FEW NIGHTS AFTER THE WEDDING...
WHY SO GLUM, CAT? WE JUST STOPPED SOME REAL NASTIES FROM ROBBING AN ENTIRE BUS FULL OF TOURISTS!
SURE. AND NOW YOU'RE SENDING ME BACK HOME.
UM... LET'S MOVE AROUND THE CORNER, CAT, SO THESE CREEPS CAN'T HEAR US.
TO MY HOUSE.
RIGHT.

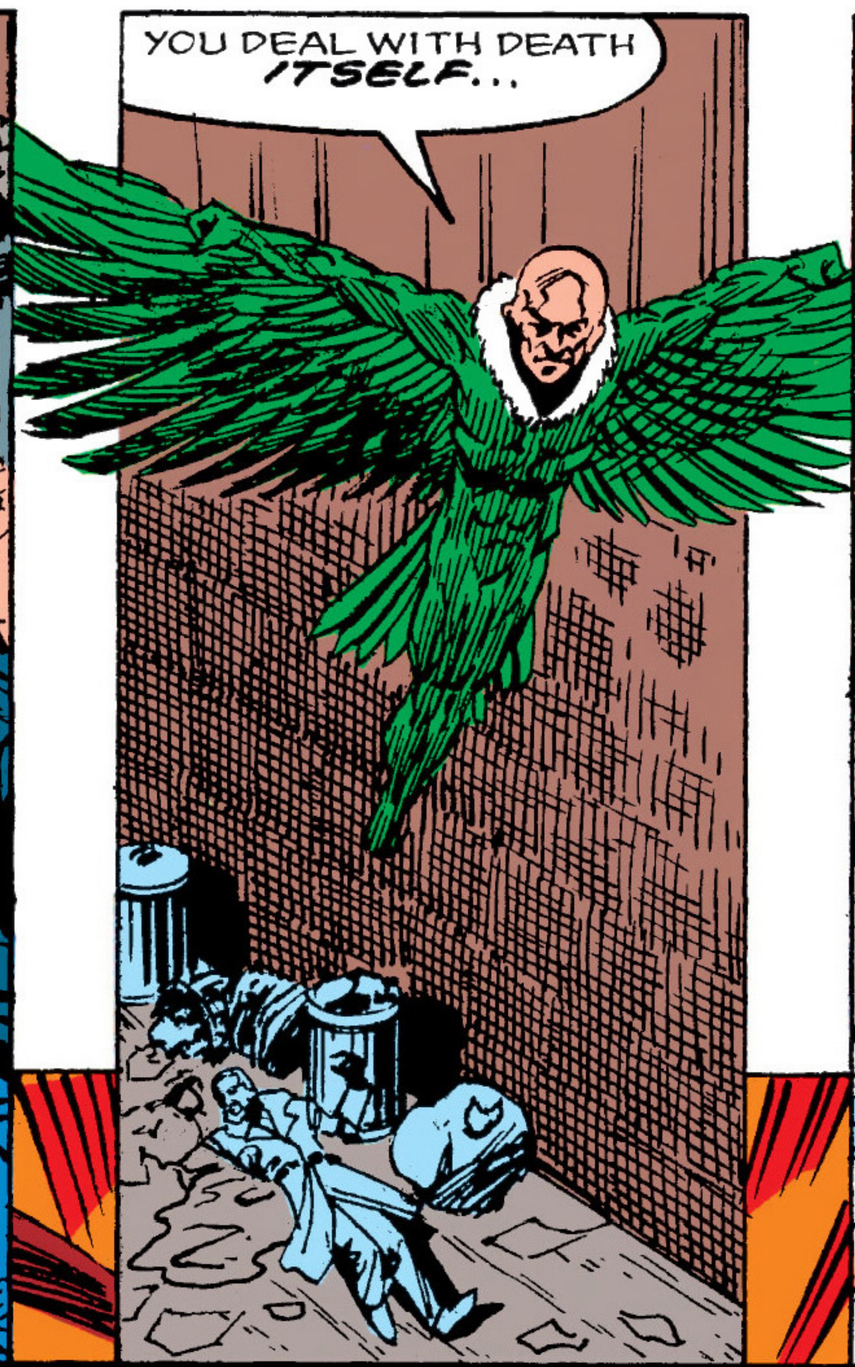

AND... THAT'S THE POINT-- THESE STUPID SECRET IDENTITIES.
YOUR IDENTITY IS PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, CAT. IF PEOPLE KNEW YOU WERE MARRIED TO PETER PARKER, THEN SAW YOU WITH SPIDER-MAN, MY SECRET'D BE OUT.
ALL MY LOVED ONES WOULD BE IN DANGER.
I'M YOUR "LOVED ONE," SPIDER--
--AND I CAN'T EVEN LIVE IN THE SAME HOUSE WITH YOU.
SEE YOU TOMORROW!
BOY, I NEVER REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT THE LOGISTICS OF GETTING MARRIED.
IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN JUST WEARING MY ORIGINAL SPIDEY OUTFIT TO MAKE THIS WORK.
IF I CAN'T COME UP WITH SOME SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM...
...AND TO HER PROBLEM WITH MY NON-COSTUMED SIDE...
...I MAY NOT HAVE A MARRIAGE LEFT TO SAVE.


A FEW WEEKS LATER--
--AS SPIDER-MAN KEEPS A DATE WITH HIS WIFE AT HIS CHELSEA APARTMENT...
DON'T WORRY, NO ONE SAW ME COME IN. BUT WHAT I WANT TO KNOW, SPIDER, IS--
--WHAT IS THIS?!

A BIRTHDAY CARD--
Hope all is well with you. Mary Jane
...FROM MARY JANE...
SHE WON'T LET GO OF YOU!
SHE'S TRYING TO STEAL YOU BACK FROM ME!
UM... I DON'T THINK SO.
AND I WISH YOU WOULDN'T OPEN MY MAIL.

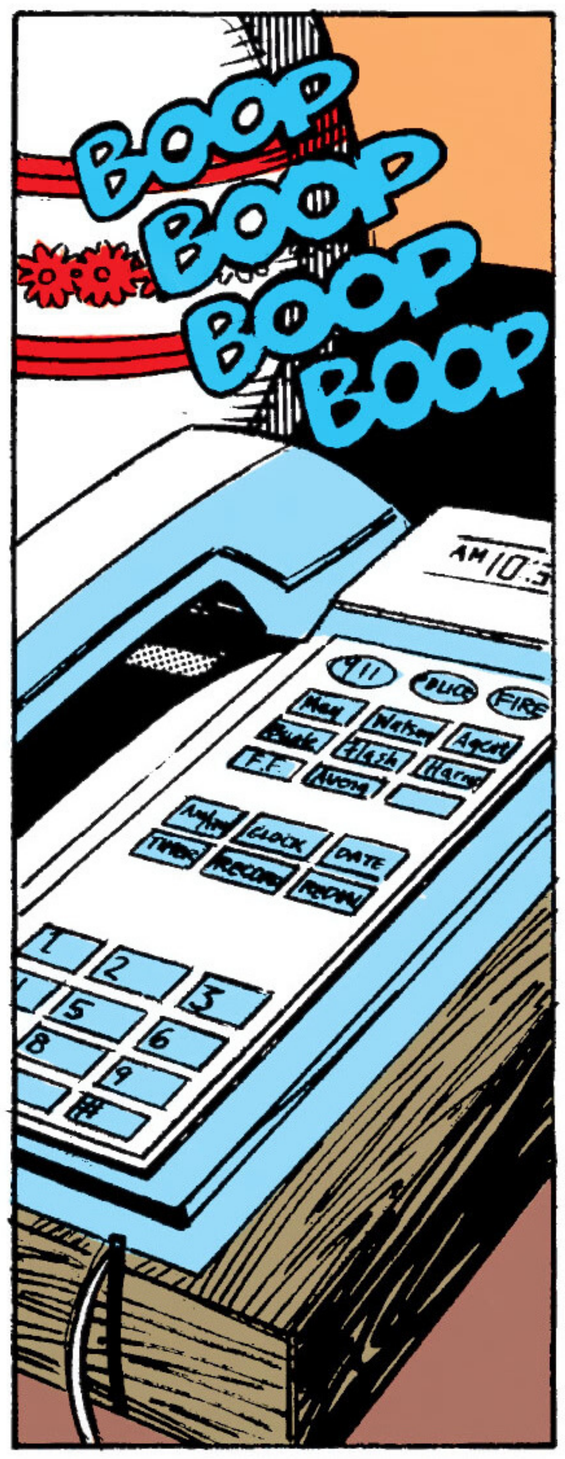
SEE!! SHE'S TURNING YOU AGAINST ME ALREADY!
IF SHE TRIES SOMETHING LIKE THAT AGAIN--
--SHE'LL GET THE SAME TREATMENT AS THE CARD!

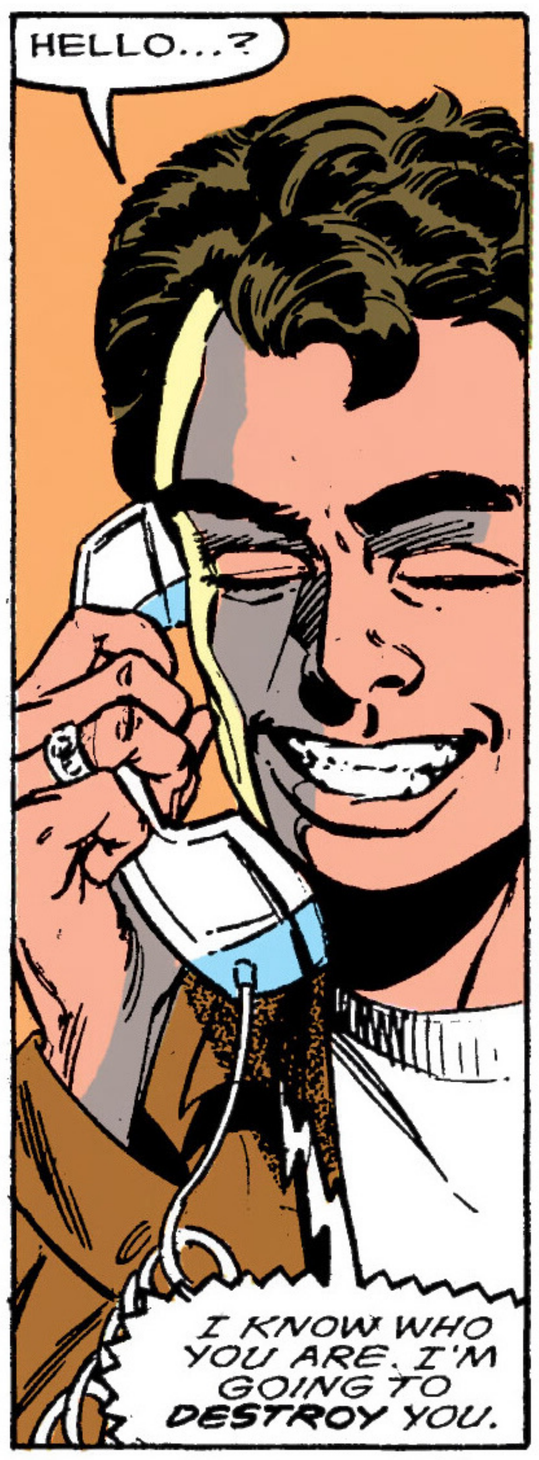
OH, FELICIA...
...FELICIA...



KWOOOOOM!

7:02 P.M.





WHAT'D THEY FIND-- SIX STIFFS?

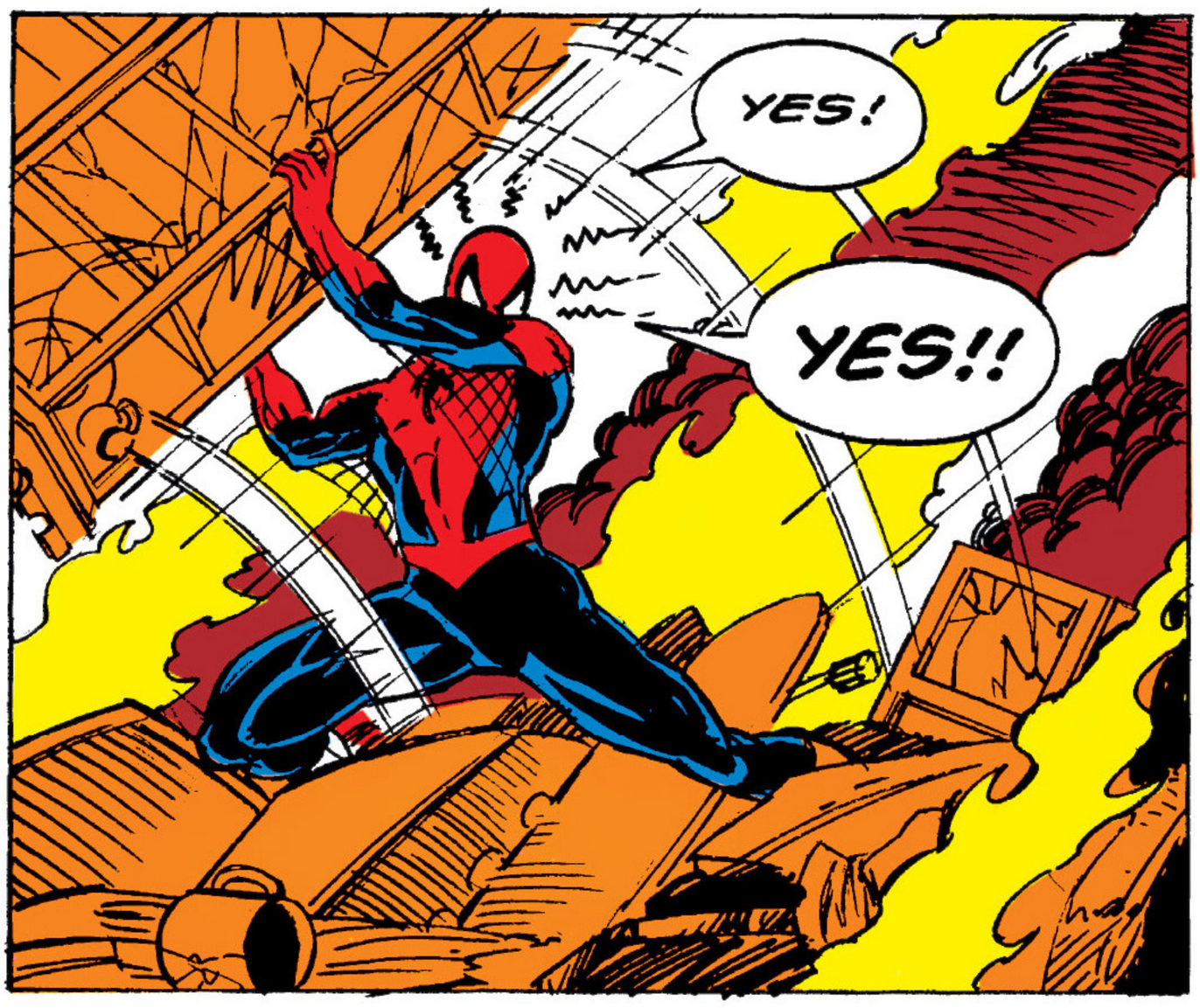
YEAH. IT WAS SOME KIND'A OLD FOLKS' HALFWAY HOUSE.

LEAST THE FIRE'S UNDER CONTROL ENOUGH FOR US TO CHECK THE BASEMENT.

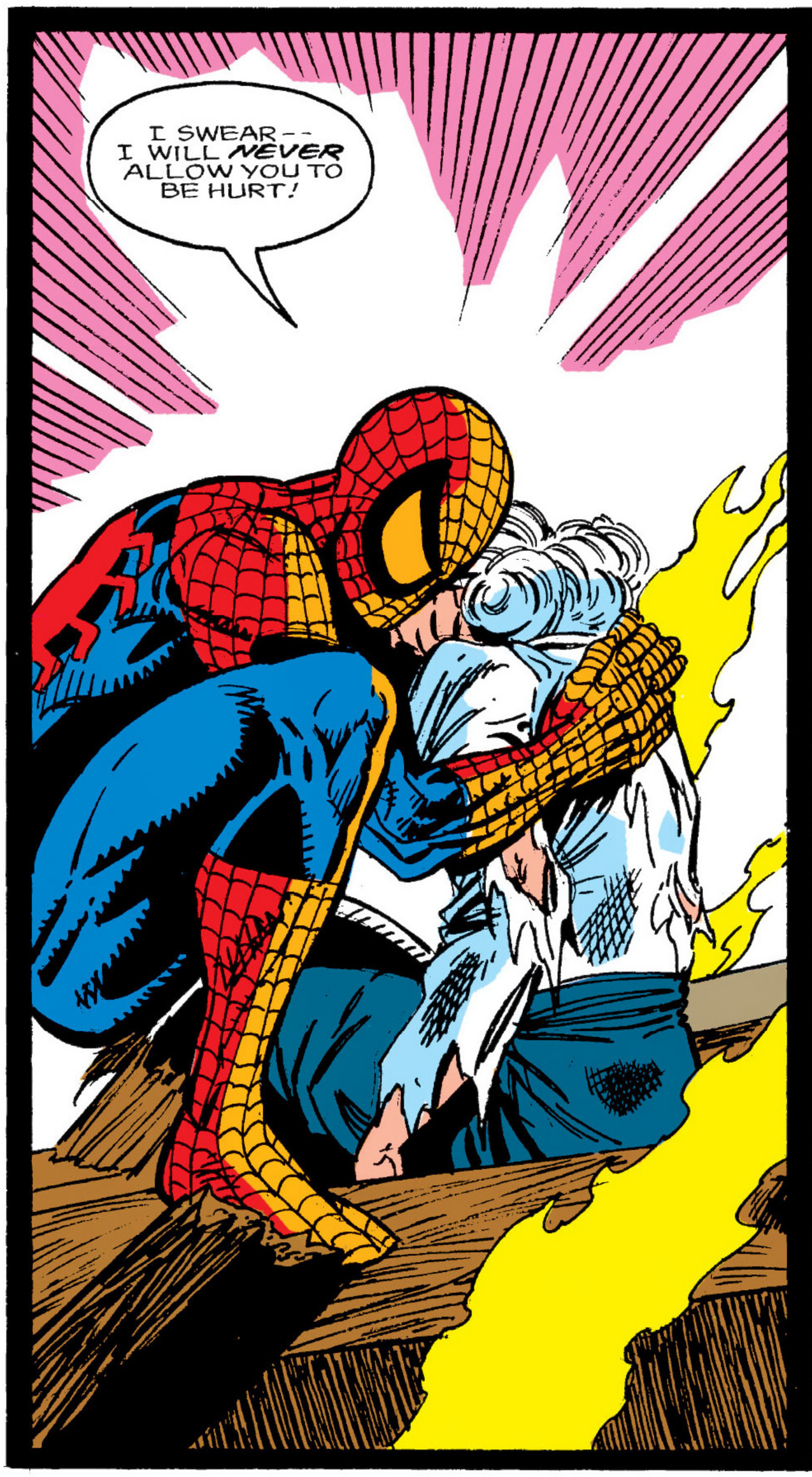
THE BASEMENT-- THEN THERE'S A CHANCE--!

YES!

RAP RAP RAP


YES!
YES!!

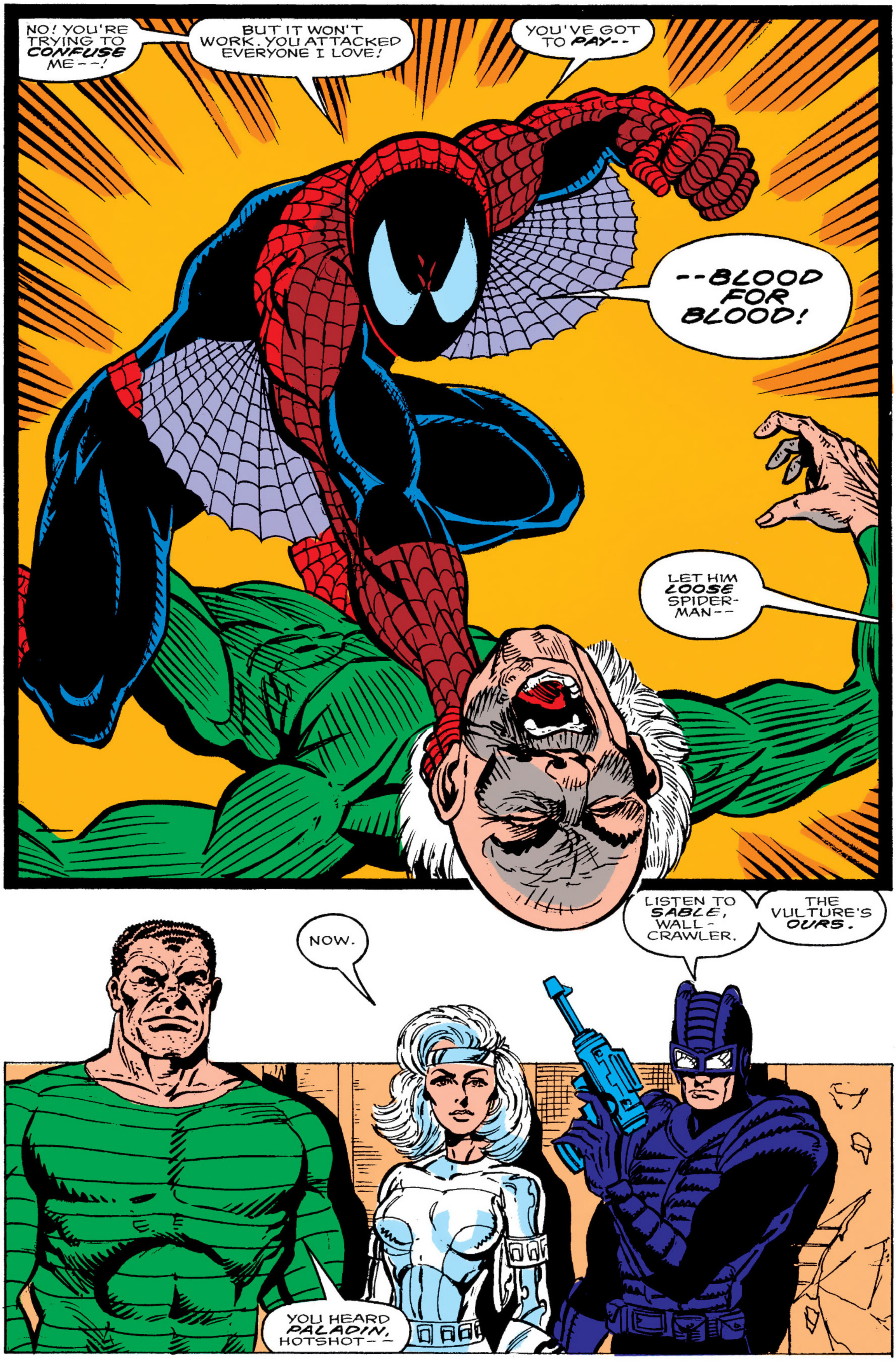
SP-SPIDER-MAN-- DON'T HURT ME--!
AUNT-- MRS. PARKER--

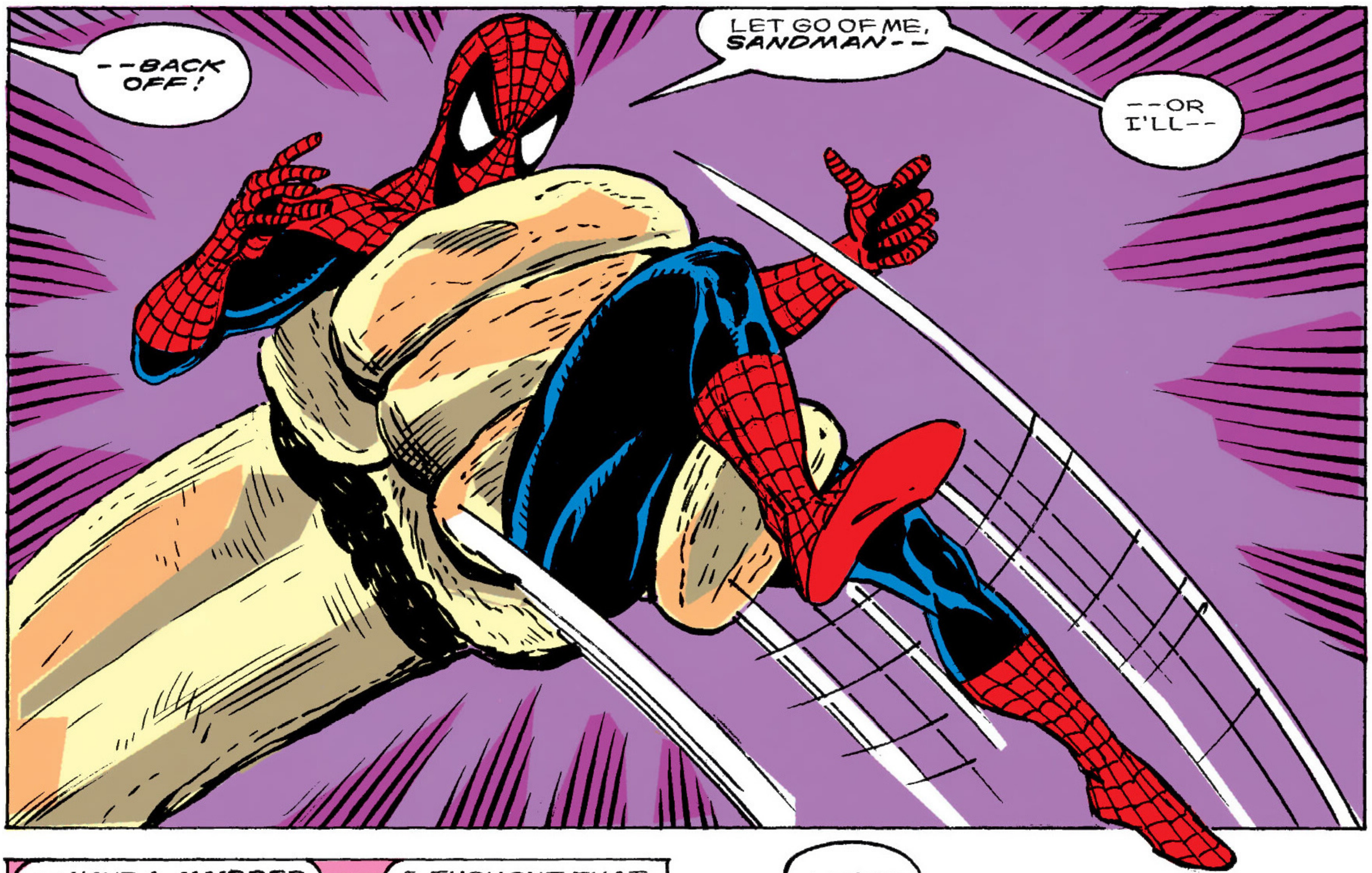

I SWEAR-- I WILL NEVER ALLOW YOU TO BE HURT!

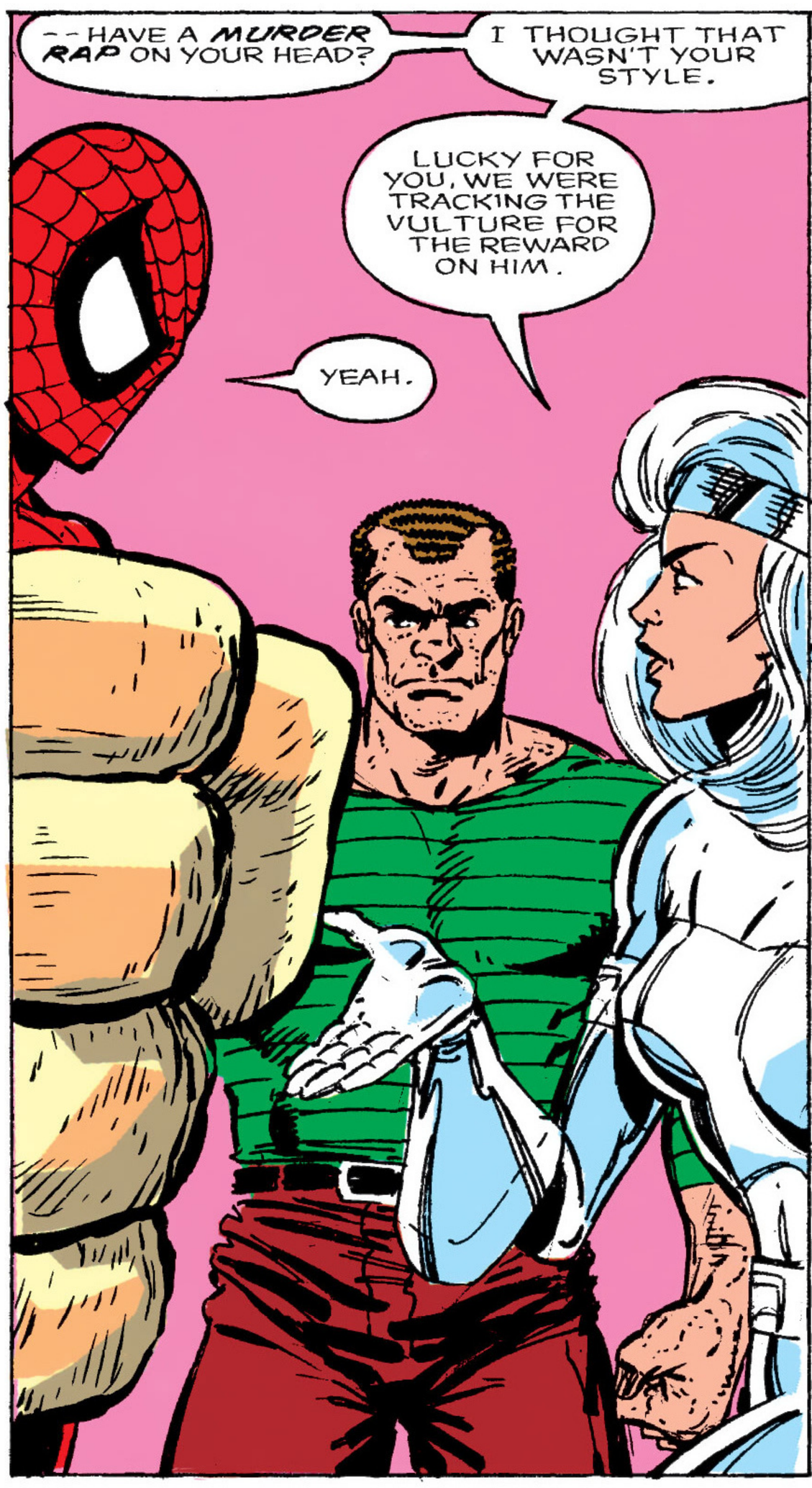
SOME PLEDGE. THE OTHERS DIED--AND SHE ALMOST DID.
SO, MUCH AS I HATE TO--I'VE GOT TO LET THE MEDICS TAKE OVER--
--AND MAKE THE VULTURE PAY!

THE APARTMENT OF FELICIA HARDY...
WONDER WHERE SPIDER IS? HE WAS SUPPOSED TO GET HERE AN HOUR AG--
PHWUT!
GAS-- CHOKING--!
UH...
FIRST THE BELOVED AUNT--
--AND NOW THE DEVOTED WIFE!

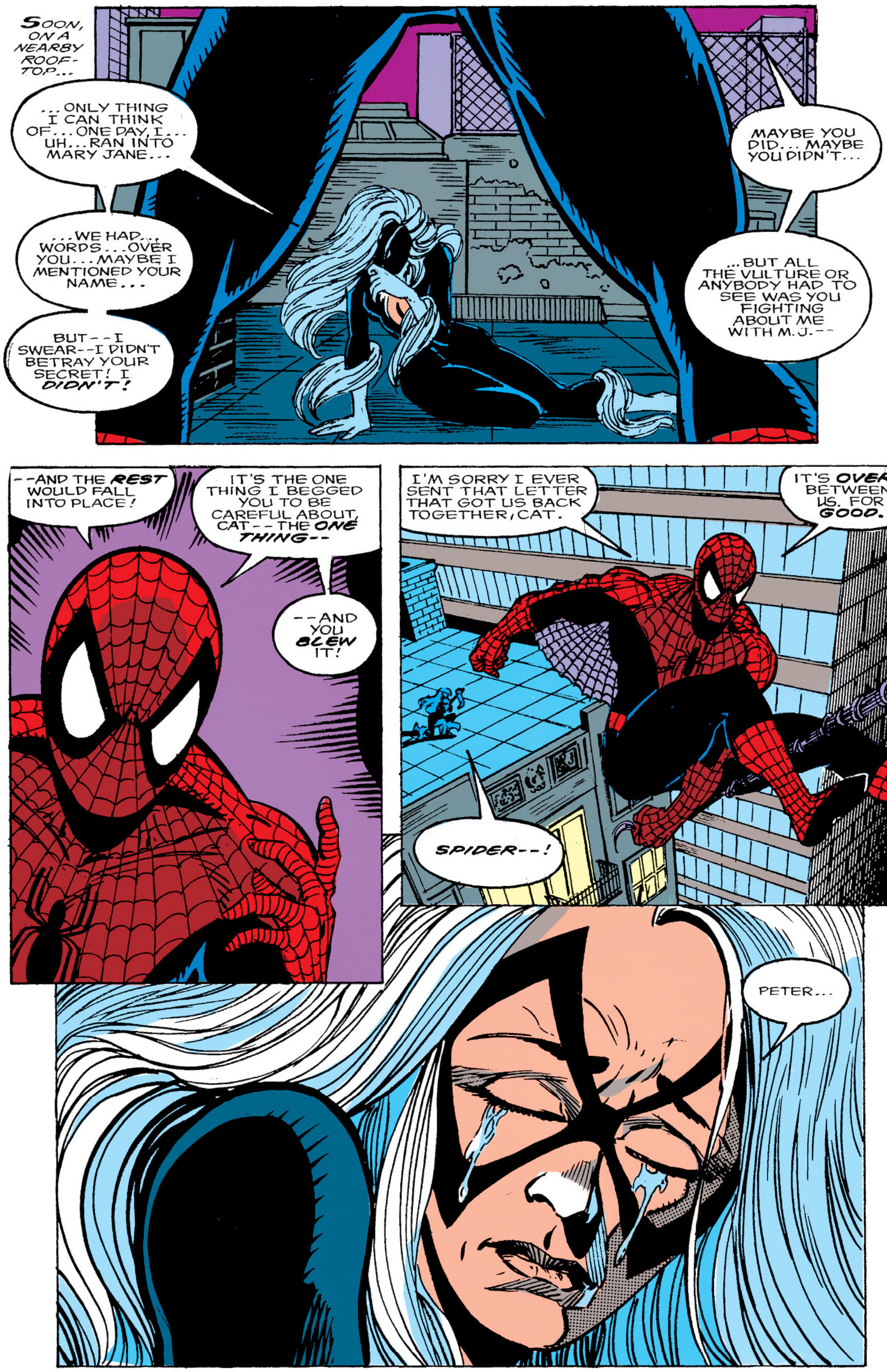
NOOOOOOO!
WHOK!
AAGH!
BRAMM!
UNNH!
NOW, WITHOUT YOUR POWER PACK--
--YOU AIN'T GOIN' NOWHERE!
EXCEPT TO THE MORGUE!
RRRIIPPP!
GO AHEAD. KILL ME. I'LL DIE HAPPY, KNOWING SOMEONE'LL GET YOU.
YOUR WIFE'S TOO CARELESS WITH YOUR SECRETS.
TWO-BIT HOOD HEARD HER BABBLING-- TOLD ME.
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME...BEFORE SHE DOES IT AGAIN...
...AND DOOMS YOU FOREVER.

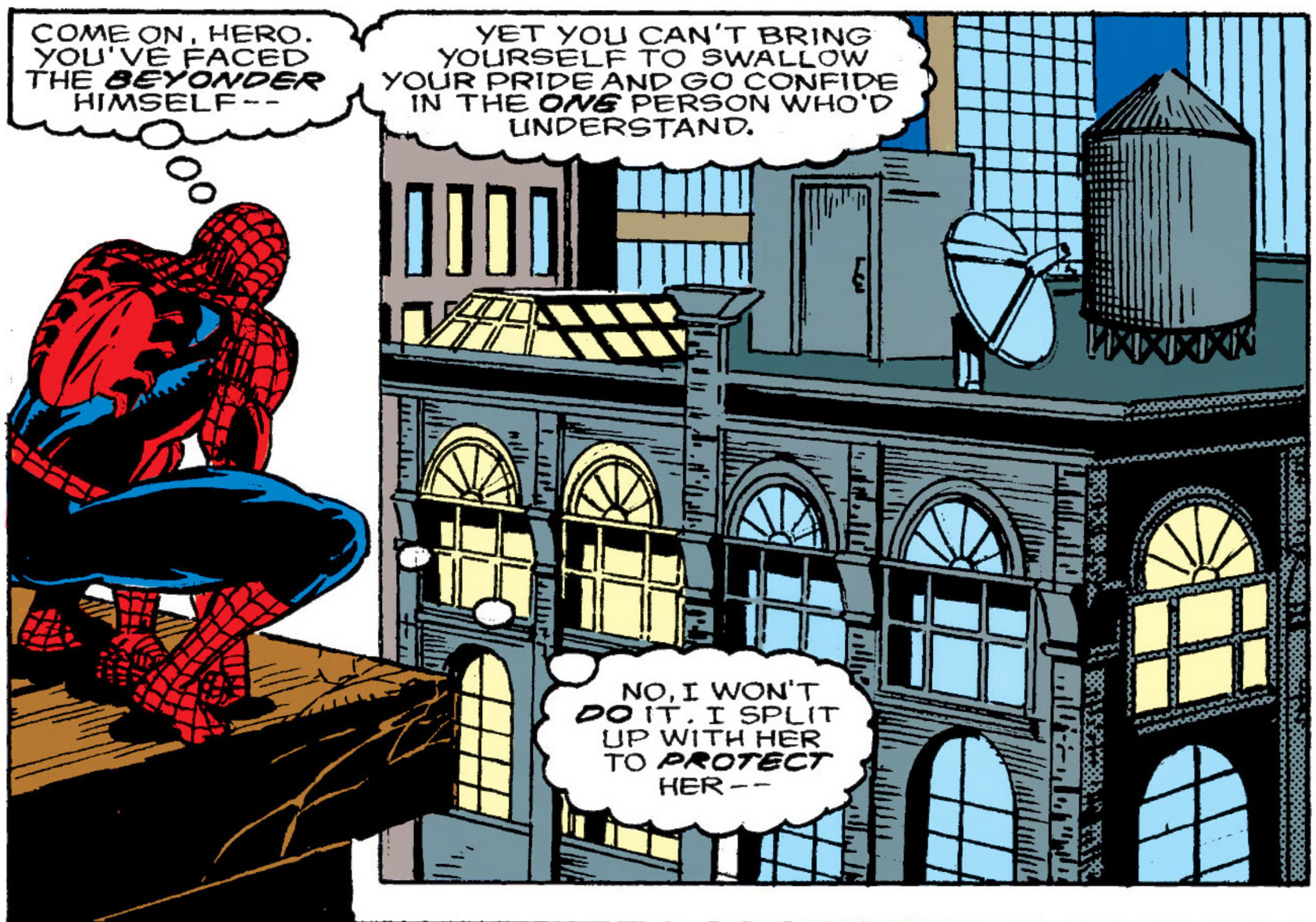

NO! YOU'RE TRYING TO CONFUSE ME--!
BUT IT WON'T WORK. YOU ATTACKED EVERYONE I LOVE!
YOU'VE GOT TO PAY--
--BLOOD FOR BLOOD!
LET HIM LOOSE SPIDER-MAN--
NOW.
LISTEN TO SABLE, WALL-CRAWLER.
THE VULTURE'S OURS.
YOU HEARD PALADIN, HOTSHOT--


--BACK OFF!
LET GO OF ME, SANDMAN--
--OR I'LL--

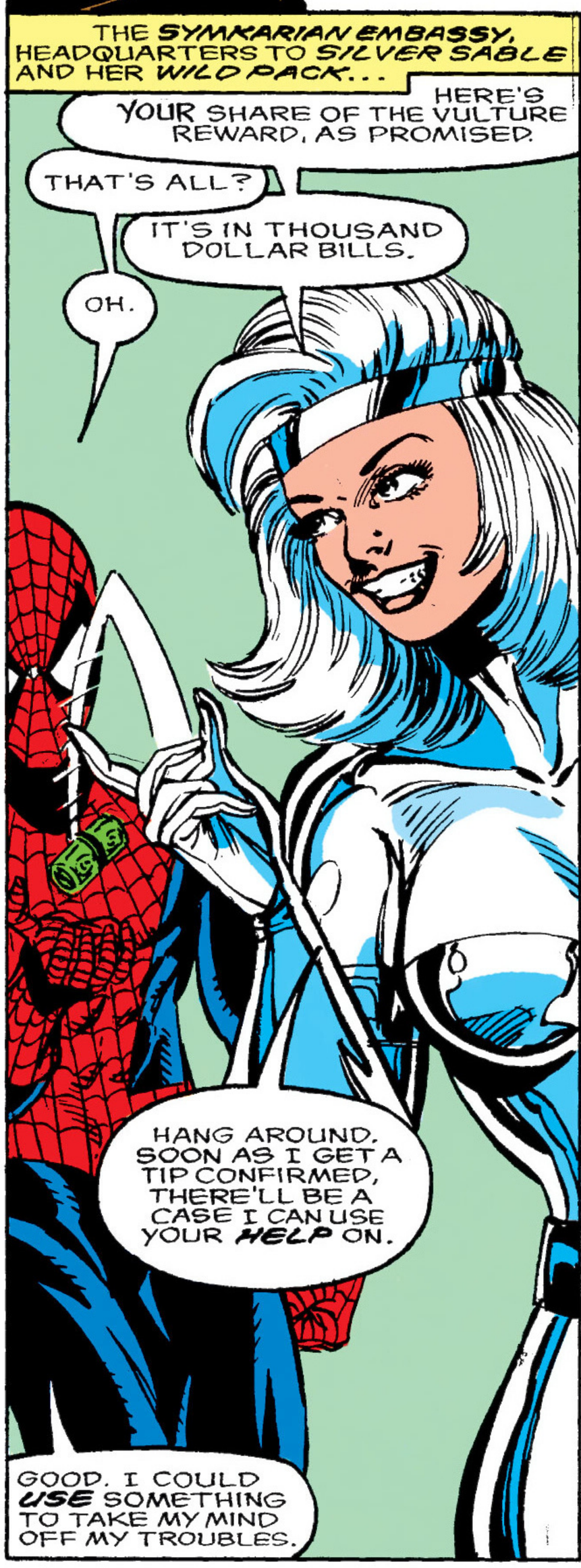

--HAVE A MURDER RAP ON YOUR HEAD?
I THOUGHT THAT WASN'T YOUR STYLE.
LUCKY FOR YOU, WE WERE TRACKING THE VULTURE FOR THE REWARD ON HIM.
YEAH.

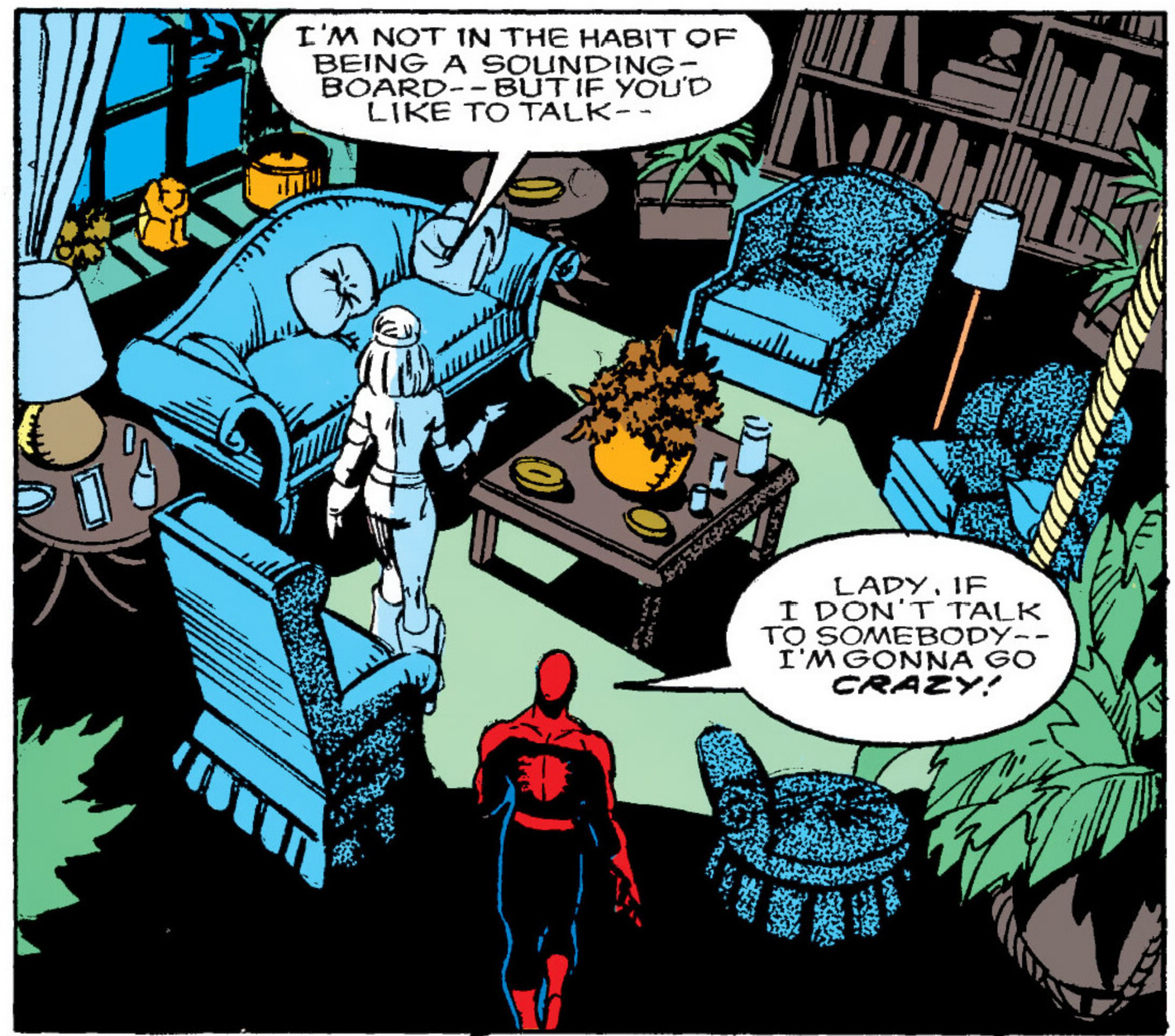
LUCKY.
TAKE HIM IN.
AND HOLD MY SHARE OF THE REWARD.
THUMPP

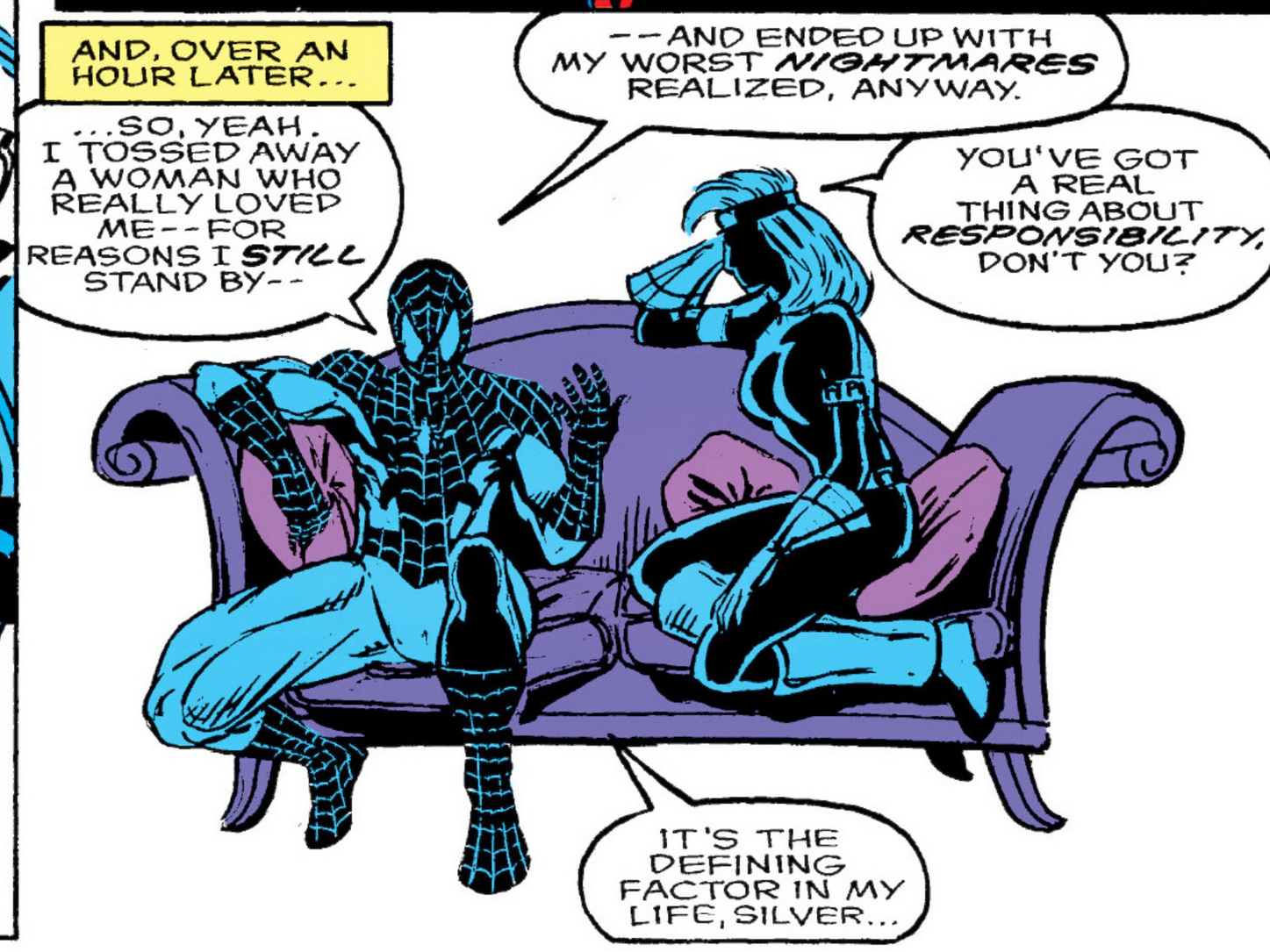

SOON, ON A NEARBY ROOF-TOP...
...ONLY THING I CAN THINK OF...ONE DAY, I... UH...RAN INTO MARY JANE...
...WE HAD... WORDS...OVER YOU...MAYBE I MENTIONED YOUR NAME...
BUT--I SWEAR--I DIDN'T BETRAY YOUR SECRET! I DIDN'T!
MAYBE YOU DID... MAYBE YOU DIDN'T...
...BUT ALL THE VULTURE OR ANYBODY HAD TO SEE WAS YOU FIGHTING ABOUT ME WITH M.J.--
--AND THE REST WOULD FALL INTO PLACE!
IT'S THE ONE THING I BEGGED YOU TO BE CAREFUL ABOUT, CAT--THE ONE THING--
--AND YOU BLEW IT!
I'M SORRY I EVER SENT THAT LETTER THAT GOT US BACK TOGETHER, CAT.
IT'S OVER BETWEEN US. FOR GOOD.
SPIDER--!
PETER...

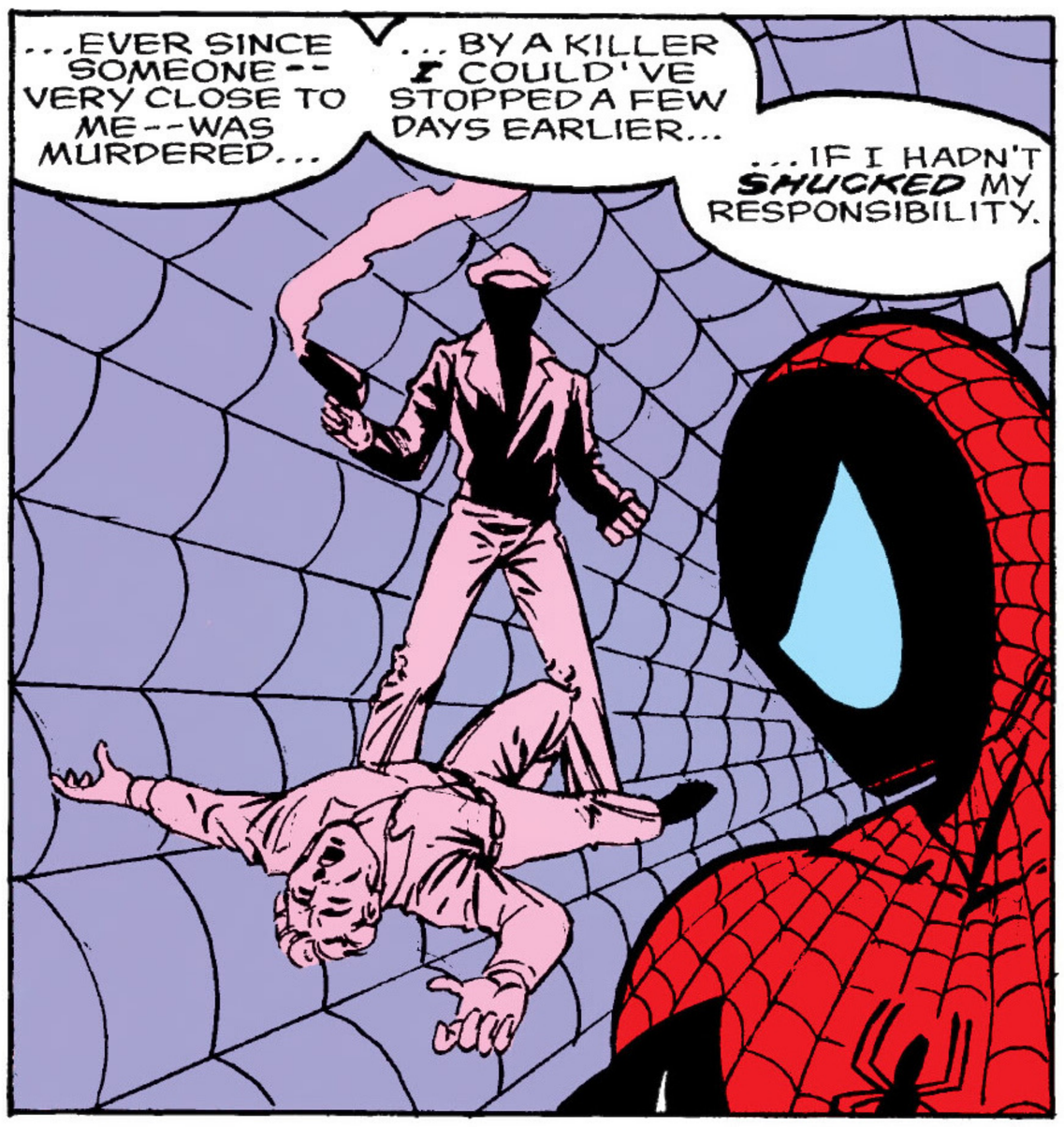

COME ON, HERO. YOU'VE FACED THE BEYONDER HIMSELF--
YET YOU CAN'T BRING YOURSELF TO SWALLOW YOUR PRIDE AND GO CONFIDE IN THE ONE PERSON WHO'D UNDERSTAND.
NO, I WON'T DO IT. I SPLIT UP WITH HER TO PROTECT HER--

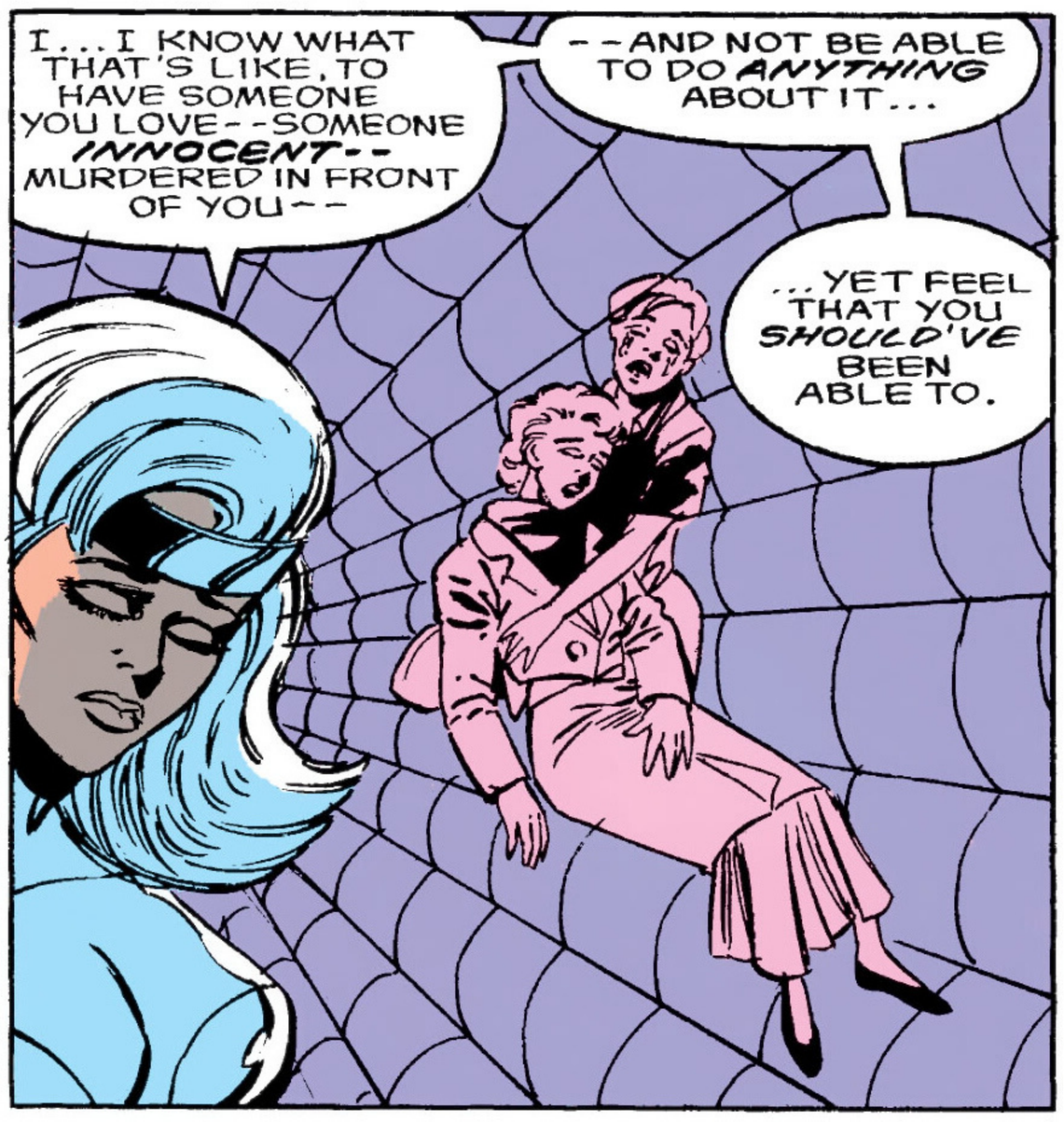
--I CAN'T BE WEAK NOW.
PETER--HERE--?
WHAT COULD BE WRONG?

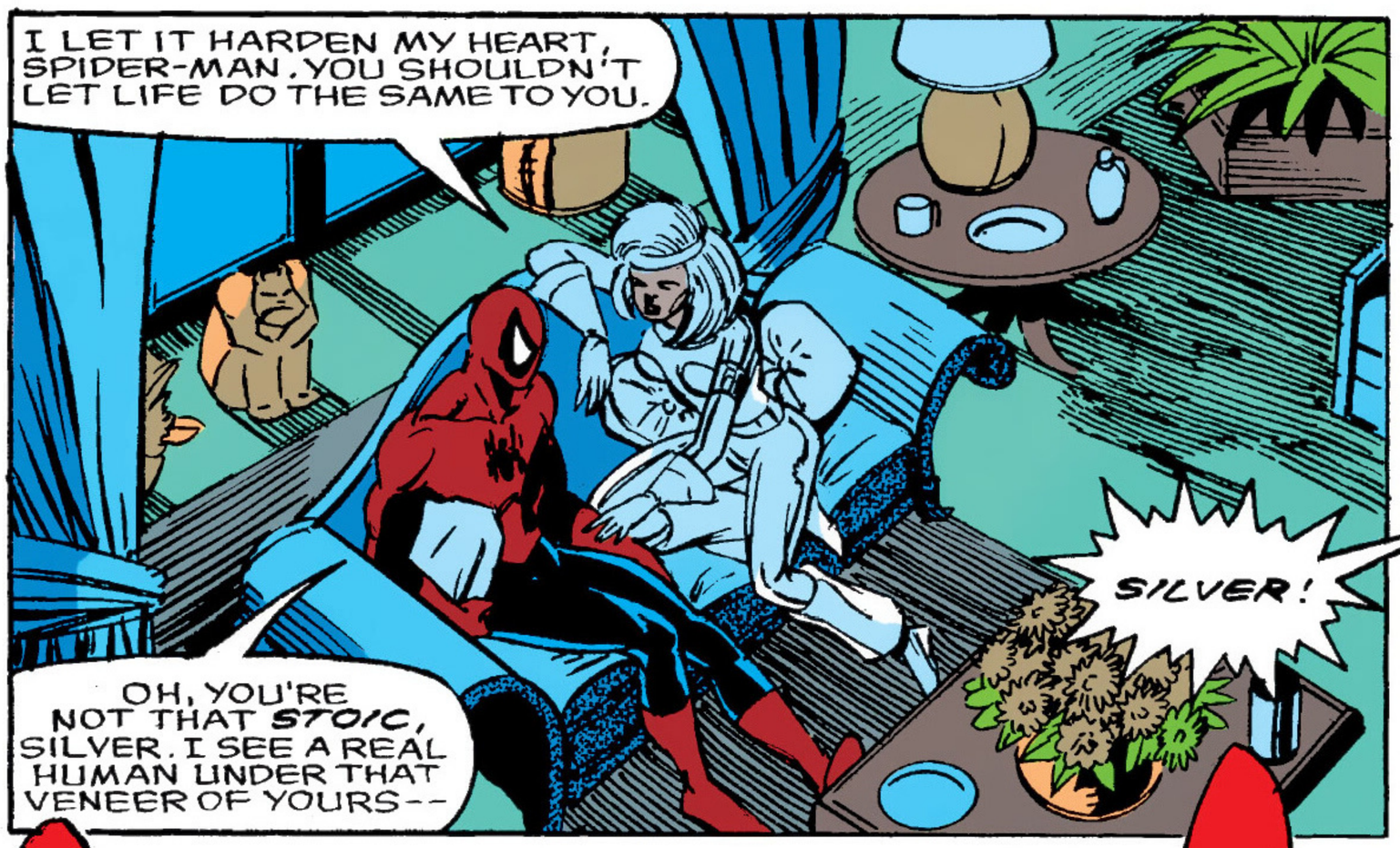

THE SYMKARIAN EMBASSY, HEADQUARTERS TO SILVER SABLE AND HER WILD PACK...
HERE'S YOUR SHARE OF THE VULTURE REWARD, AS PROMISED.
THAT'S ALL?
IT'S IN THOUSAND DOLLAR BILLS.
OH.
HANG AROUND. SOON AS I GET A TIP CONFIRMED, THERE'LL BE A CASE I CAN USE YOUR HELP ON.
GOOD. I COULD USE SOMETHING TO TAKE MY MIND OFF MY TROUBLES.


I'M NOT IN THE HABIT OF BEING A SOUNDING-BOARD--BUT IF YOU'D LIKE TO TALK--
LADY, IF I DON'T TALK TO SOMEBODY--I'M GONNA GO CRAZY!

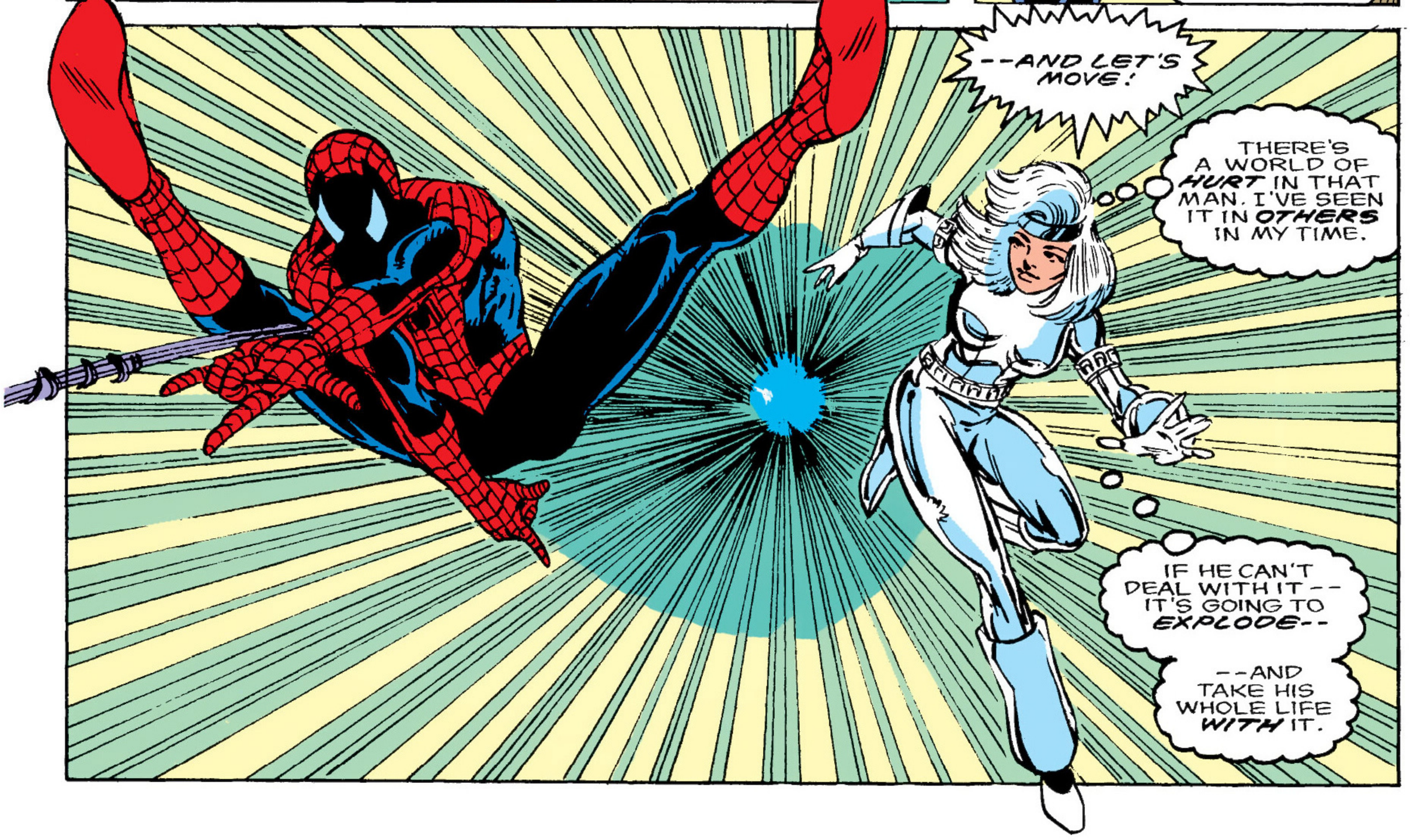

AND, OVER AN HOUR LATER...
...SO, YEAH. I TOSSED AWAY A WOMAN WHO REALLY LOVED ME--FOR REASONS I STILL STAND BY--
--AND ENDED UP WITH MY WORST NIGHTMARES REALIZED, ANYWAY.
YOU'VE GOT A REAL THING ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY, DON'T YOU?
IT'S THE DEFINING FACTOR IN MY LIFE, SILVER...


...EVER SINCE SOMEONE -- VERY CLOSE TO ME -- WAS MURDERED...
...BY A KILLER I COULD'VE STOPPED A FEW DAYS EARLIER...
...IF I HADN'T SHUCKED MY RESPONSIBILITY.


I...I KNOW WHAT THAT'S LIKE, TO HAVE SOMEONE YOU LOVE -- SOMEONE INNOCENT -- MURDERED IN FRONT OF YOU --
-- AND NOT BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT...
...YET FEEL THAT YOU SHOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO.


I LET IT HARDEN MY HEART, SPIDER-MAN. YOU SHOULDN'T LET LIFE DO THE SAME TO YOU.
SILVER!
OH, YOU'RE NOT THAT STOIC, SILVER. I SEE A REAL HUMAN UNDER THAT VENEER OF YOURS --

FORTUNOV TIPPED US! THE TERRORISTS ARE HOLED UP ON HUDSON STREET!
SIGH THEN ROUND UP THE REST OF THE PACK --


--AND LET'S MOVE!
THERE'S A WORLD OF HURT IN THAT MAN. I'VE SEEN IT IN OTHERS IN MY TIME.
IF HE CAN'T DEAL WITH IT -- IT'S GOING TO EXPLODE --
-- AND TAKE HIS WHOLE LIFE WITH IT.

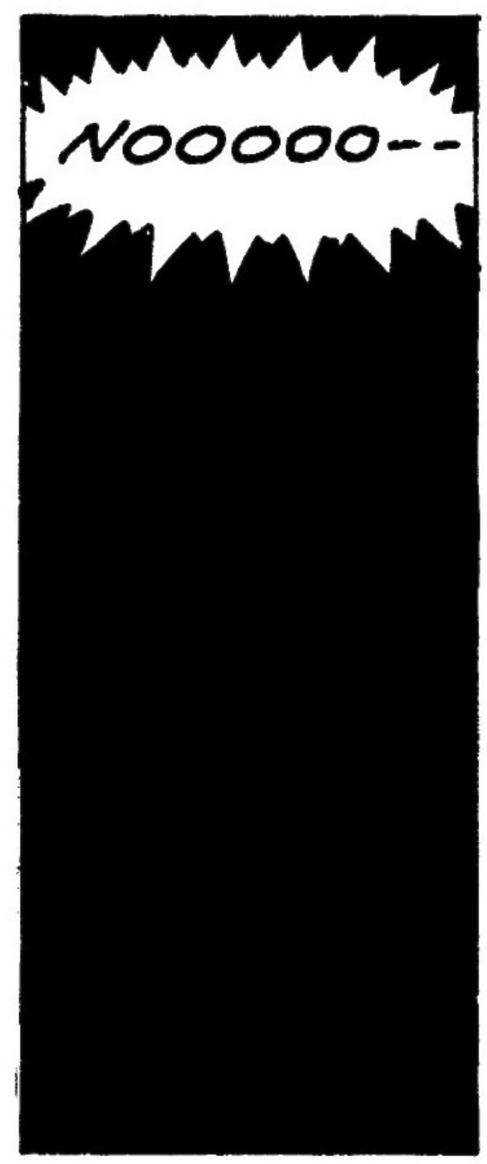
RYKER'S ISLAND PRISON, SEVERAL DAYS LATER...

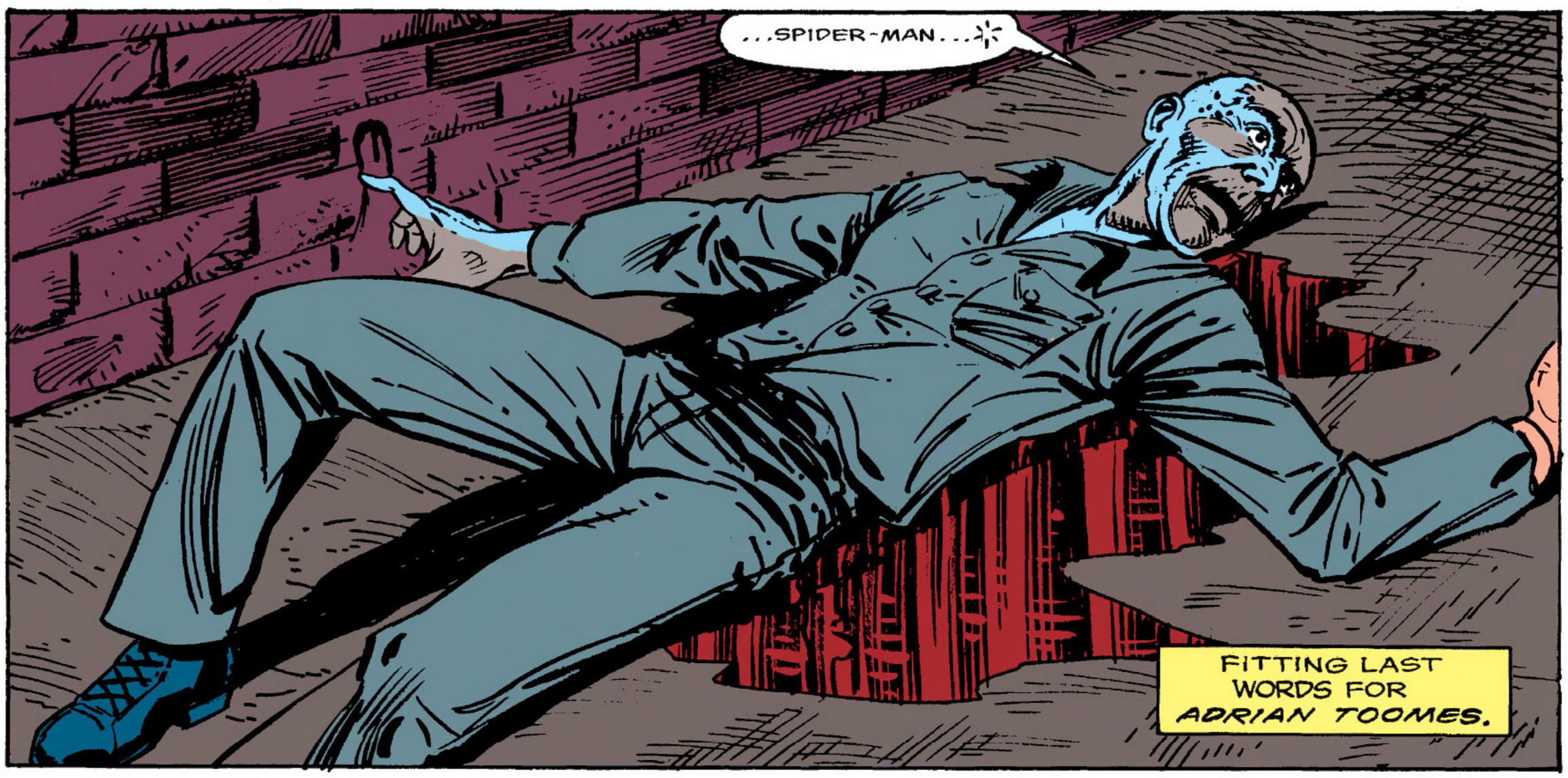
BRAKKA! BRAKKA! BRAKKA!
UNH

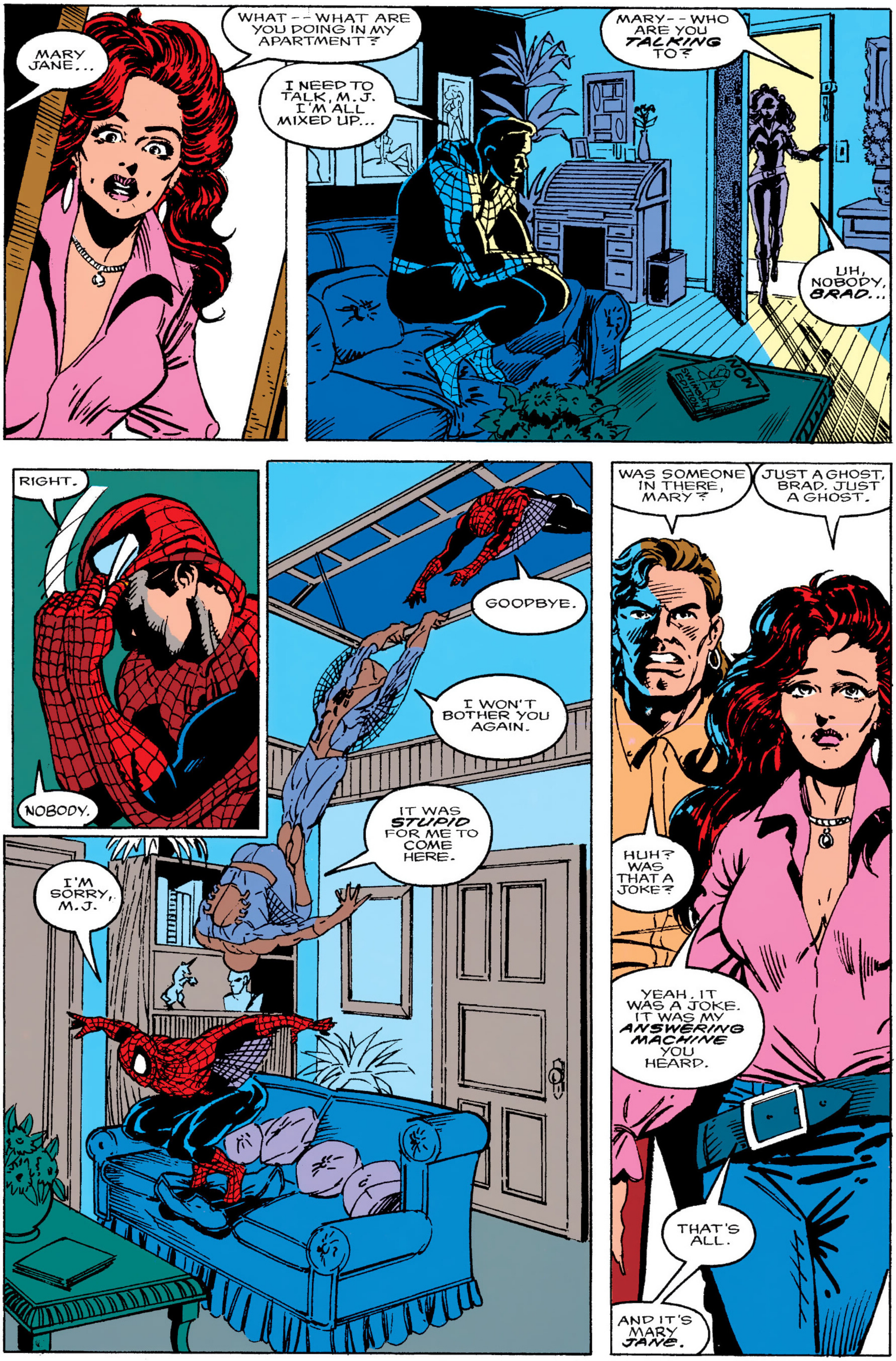
FOOLS! I WASN'T ANYWHERE NEAR AS HURT AS IT SEEMED!

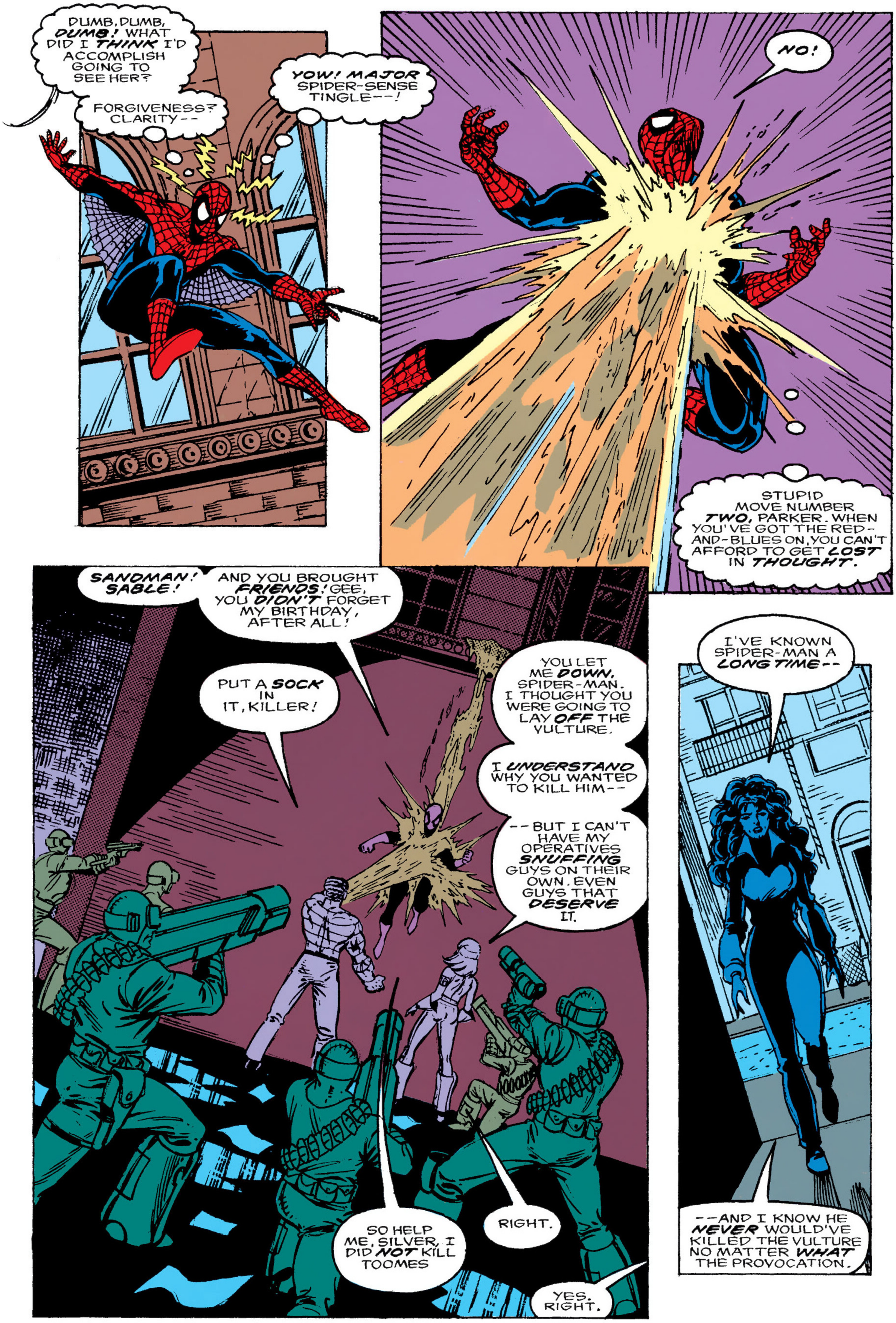
OR AS HURT AS YOU'RE GOING TO BE, VULTURE!
BOK!
YOU!

YEAH. ME.
YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF PAYBACK COMING, VULTCH
NO! NO!


NOOOOO--

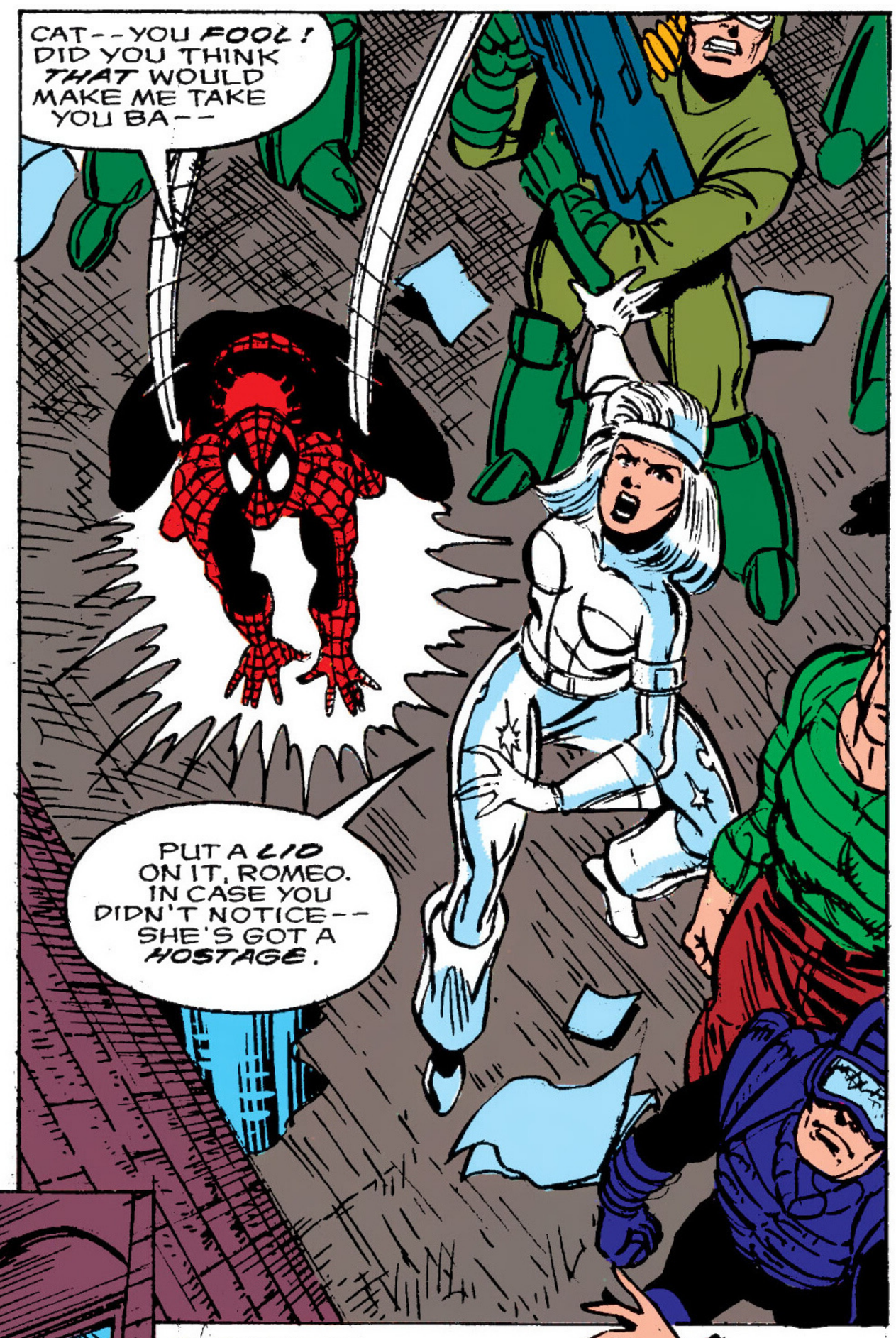

...SPIDER-MAN...
FITTING LAST WORDS FOR ADRIAN TOOMES.

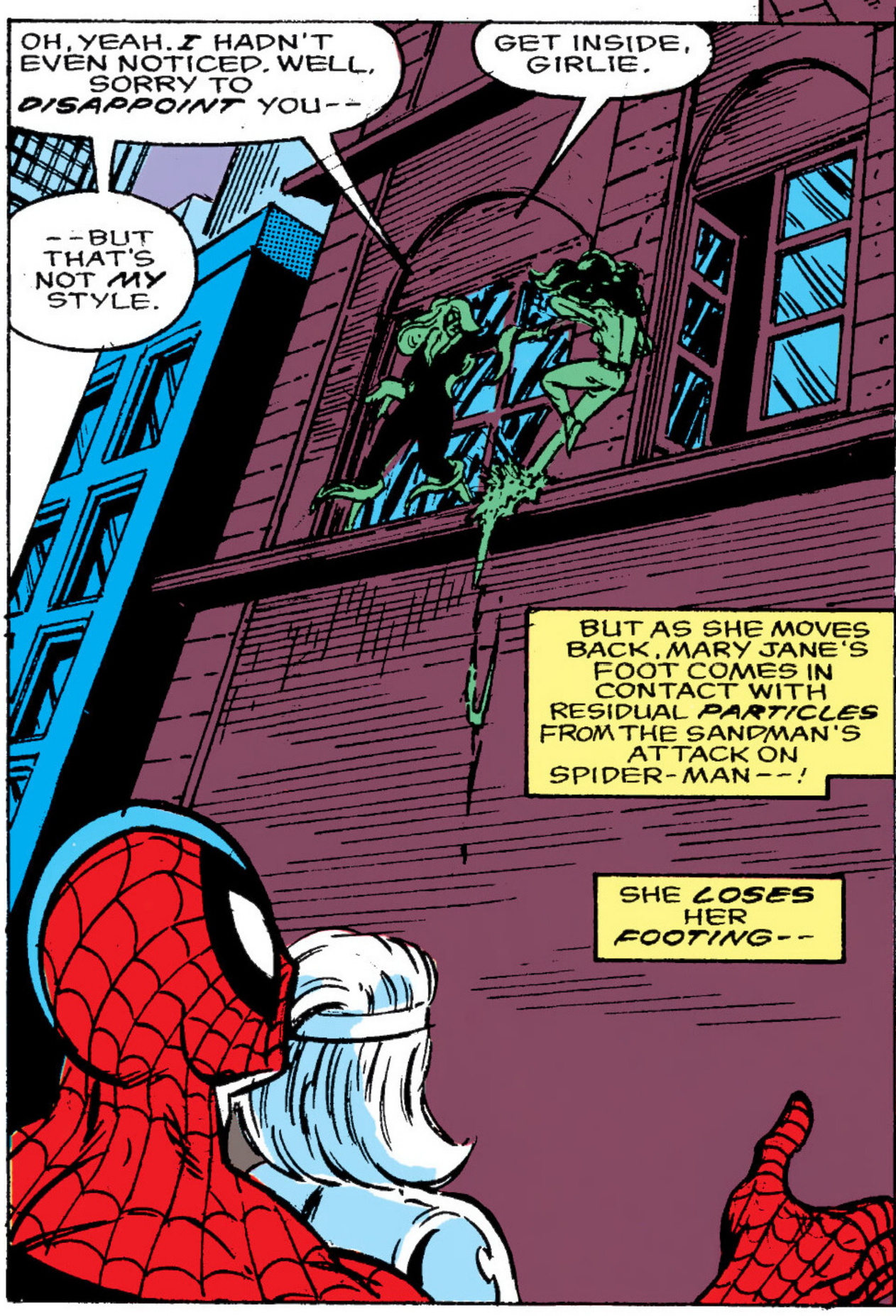

MARY JANE...
WHAT -- WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY APARTMENT?
I NEED TO TALK, M.J. I'M ALL MIXED UP...
MARY-- WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?
UH, NOBODY, BRAD...
RIGHT.
NOBODY.
GOODBYE.
I WON'T BOTHER YOU AGAIN.
IT WAS STUPID FOR ME TO COME HERE.
I'M SORRY, M.J.
WAS SOMEONE IN THERE, MARY?
JUST A GHOST, BRAD. JUST A GHOST.
HUH? WAS THAT A JOKE?
YEAH. IT WAS A JOKE. IT WAS MY ANSWERING MACHINE YOU HEARD.
THAT'S ALL.
AND IT'S MARY JANE.


DUMB, DUMB, DUMB! WHAT DID I THINK I'D ACCOMPLISH GOING TO SEE HER?
FORGIVENESS? CLARITY--
YOW! MAJOR SPIDER-SENSE TINGLE--!
NO!
STUPID MOVE NUMBER TWO, PARKER. WHEN YOU'VE GOT THE RED-AND-BLUES ON, YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO GET LOST IN THOUGHT.
SANDMAN! SABLE!
AND YOU BROUGHT FRIENDS! GEE, YOU DIDN'T FORGET MY BIRTHDAY, AFTER ALL!
PUT A SOCK IN IT, KILLER!
YOU LET ME DOWN, SPIDER-MAN. I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO LAY OFF THE VULTURE.
I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU WANTED TO KILL HIM--
--BUT I CAN'T HAVE MY OPERATIVES SNUFFING GUYS ON THEIR OWN. EVEN GUYS THAT DESERVE IT.
SO HELP ME, SILVER, I DID NOT KILL TOOMES
RIGHT.
YES. RIGHT.
I'VE KNOWN SPIDER-MAN A LONG TIME--
--AND I KNOW HE NEVER WOULD'VE KILLED THE VULTURE NO MATTER WHAT THE PROVOCATION.

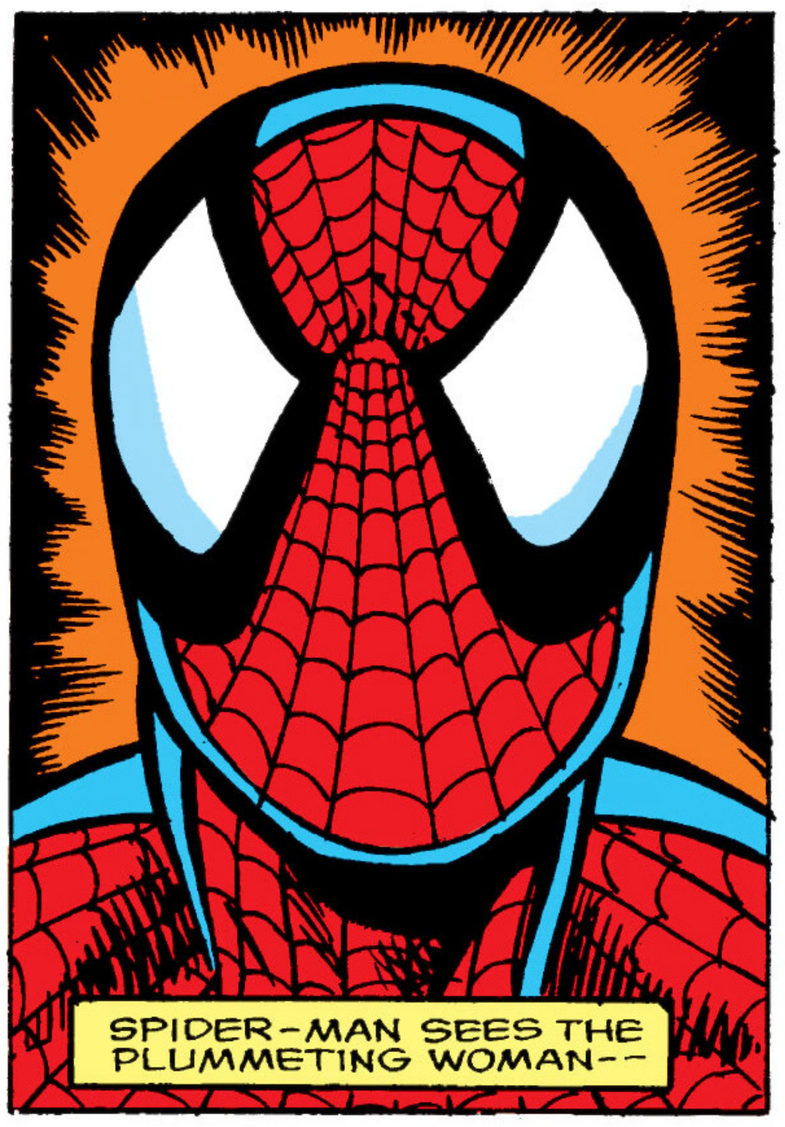
LADY, YOU'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A DANGEROUS GAME.
TAKE A HIKE.
NOT UNTIL YOU LET HIM GO.
BYOW!
BYOW!
BYOW!
BYOW!
NOBODY "LETS" ME GO OR STAY--
NO! NOOOO!
--ESPECIALLY NOT A CARELESS HALFWIT LIKE YOU, SANDMAN--
!$☆@$!!
BYOW!
BYOW!
I GOTCHA, LADY!
ANYBODY'S GONNA DO YOU ANY HARM--
--IT'LL BE ME!

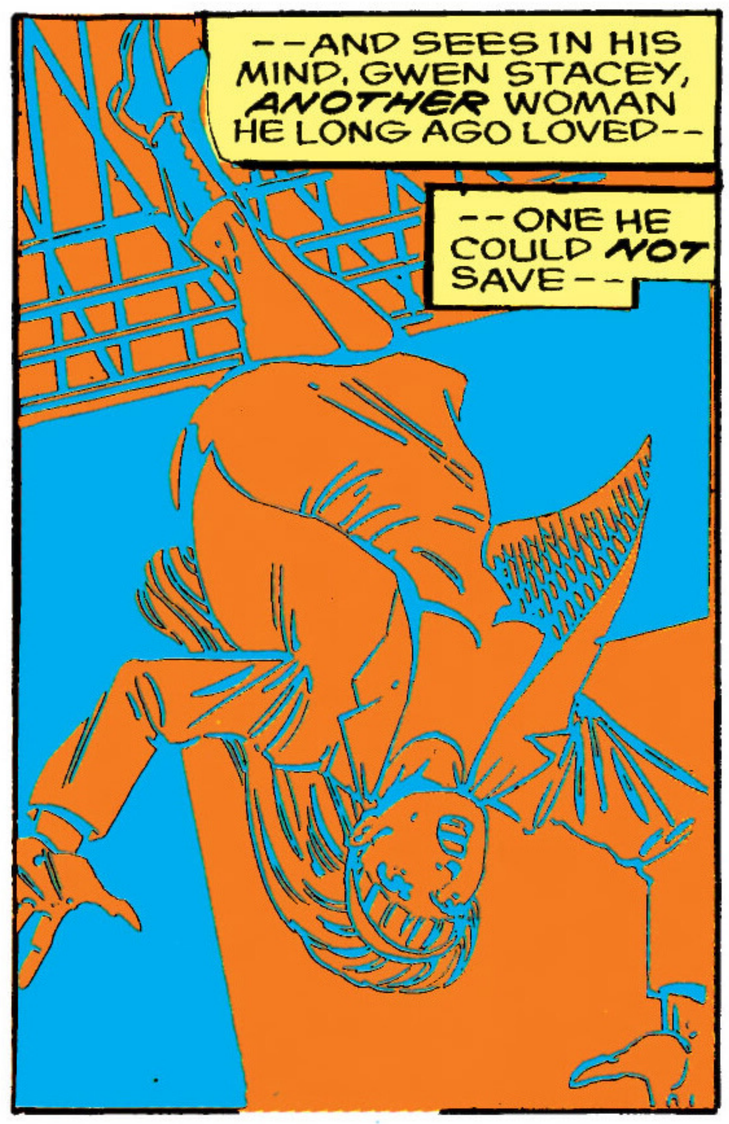
HAD A FEELING I'D FIND SPIDER NOT FAR FROM YOUR DIGS.
HE DIDN'T KILL THE VULTURE, SABLE. I DID.
I HAD TO MAKE UP FOR A...MISTAKE I MADE.

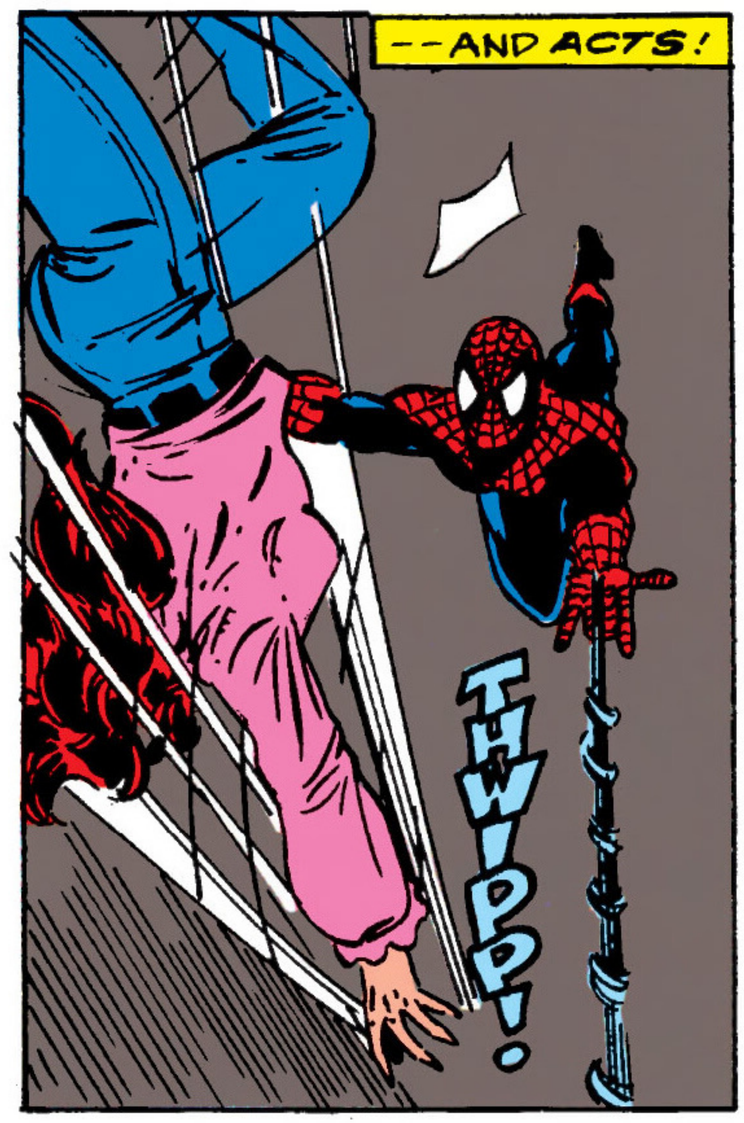

CAT--YOU FOOL! DID YOU THINK THAT WOULD MAKE ME TAKE YOU BA--
PUT A LID ON IT, ROMEO. IN CASE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE--SHE'S GOT A HOSTAGE.


OH, YEAH. I HADN'T EVEN NOTICED. WELL, SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU--
GET INSIDE, GIRLIE.
--BUT THAT'S NOT MY STYLE.
BUT AS SHE MOVES BACK, MARY JANE'S FOOT COMES IN CONTACT WITH RESIDUAL PARTICLES FROM THE SANDMAN'S ATTACK ON SPIDER-MAN--!
SHE LOSES HER FOOTING--

--AND--
OH, NO--!
WATSON--!!

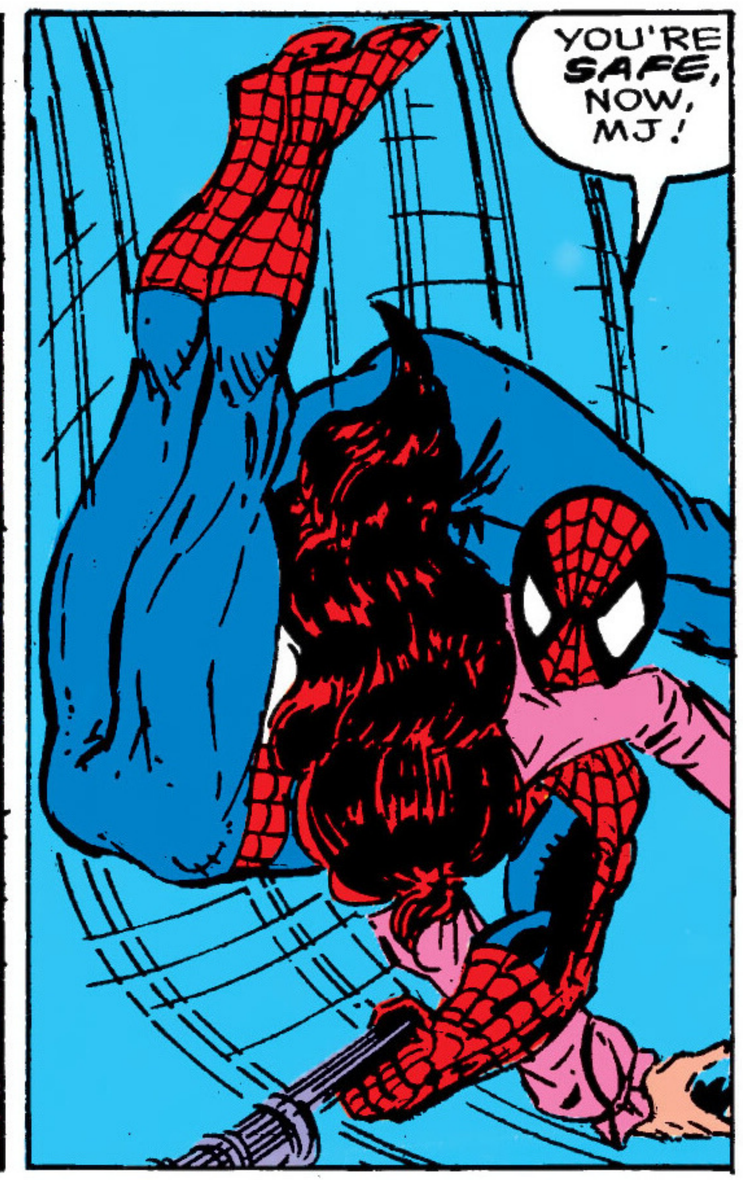

SPIDER-MAN SEES THE PLUMMETING WOMAN--


--AND SEES IN HIS MIND, GWEN STACEY, ANOTHER WOMAN HE LONG AGO LOVED--
--ONE HE COULD NOT SAVE--


--AND ACTS!
THWIPP!

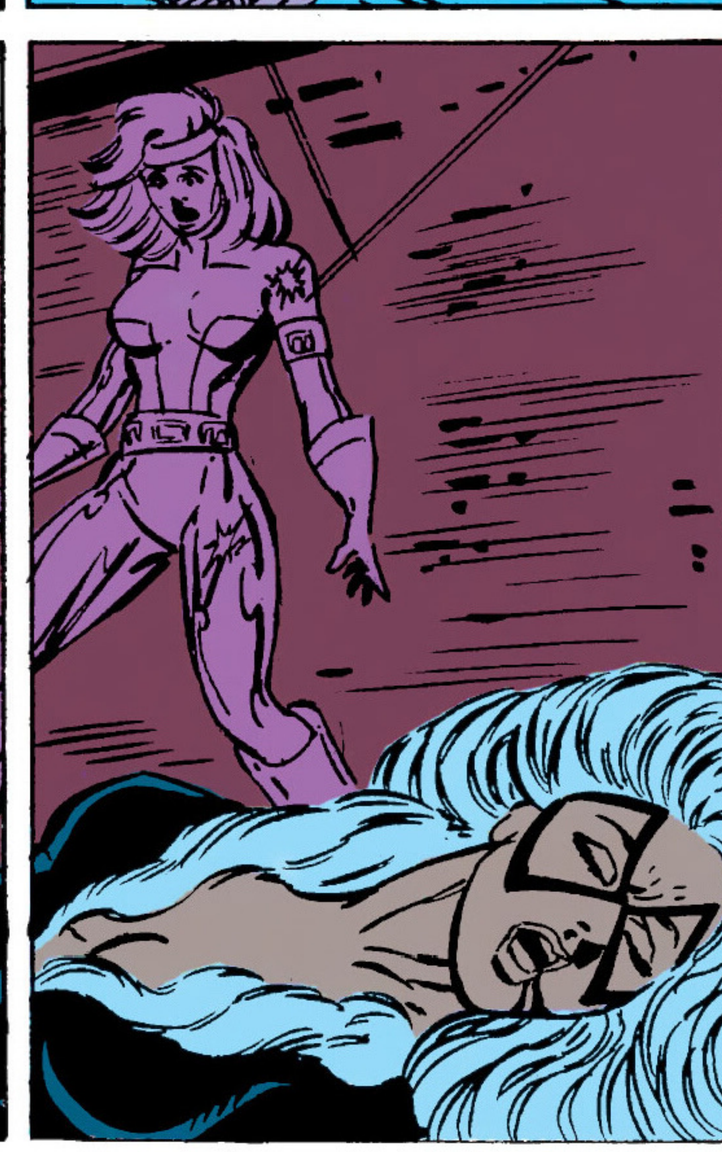
BUT THE JUST-ARRIVING PALADIN, MISUNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION--
--ALSO, ACTS.
PYOW! PYOW!
YOU WON'T GET A CHANCE TO FINISH HER, CAT!
NO! PALADIN-- STOP!

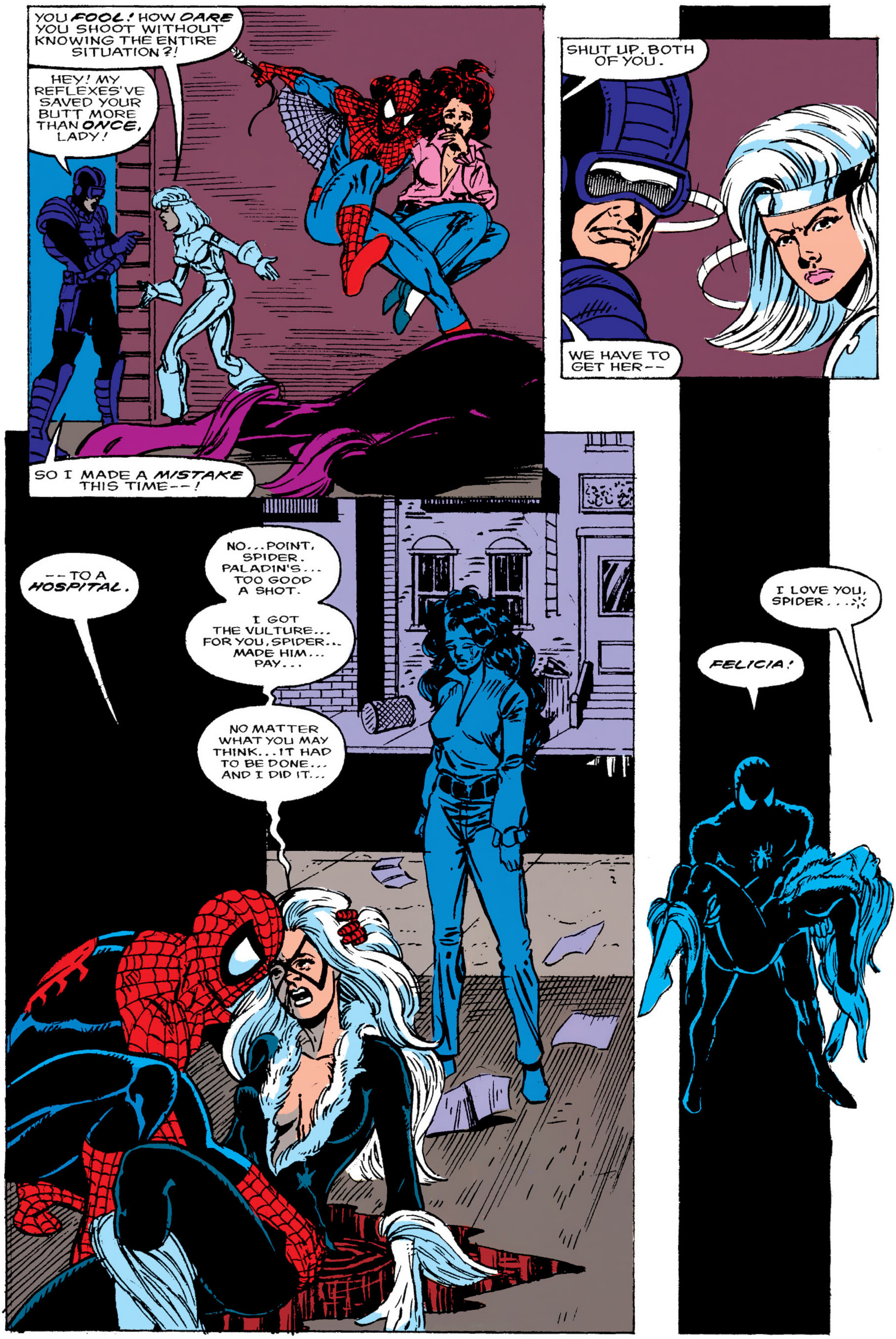
PYOW!
PYOW!
PYOW!
NOOOOO--!

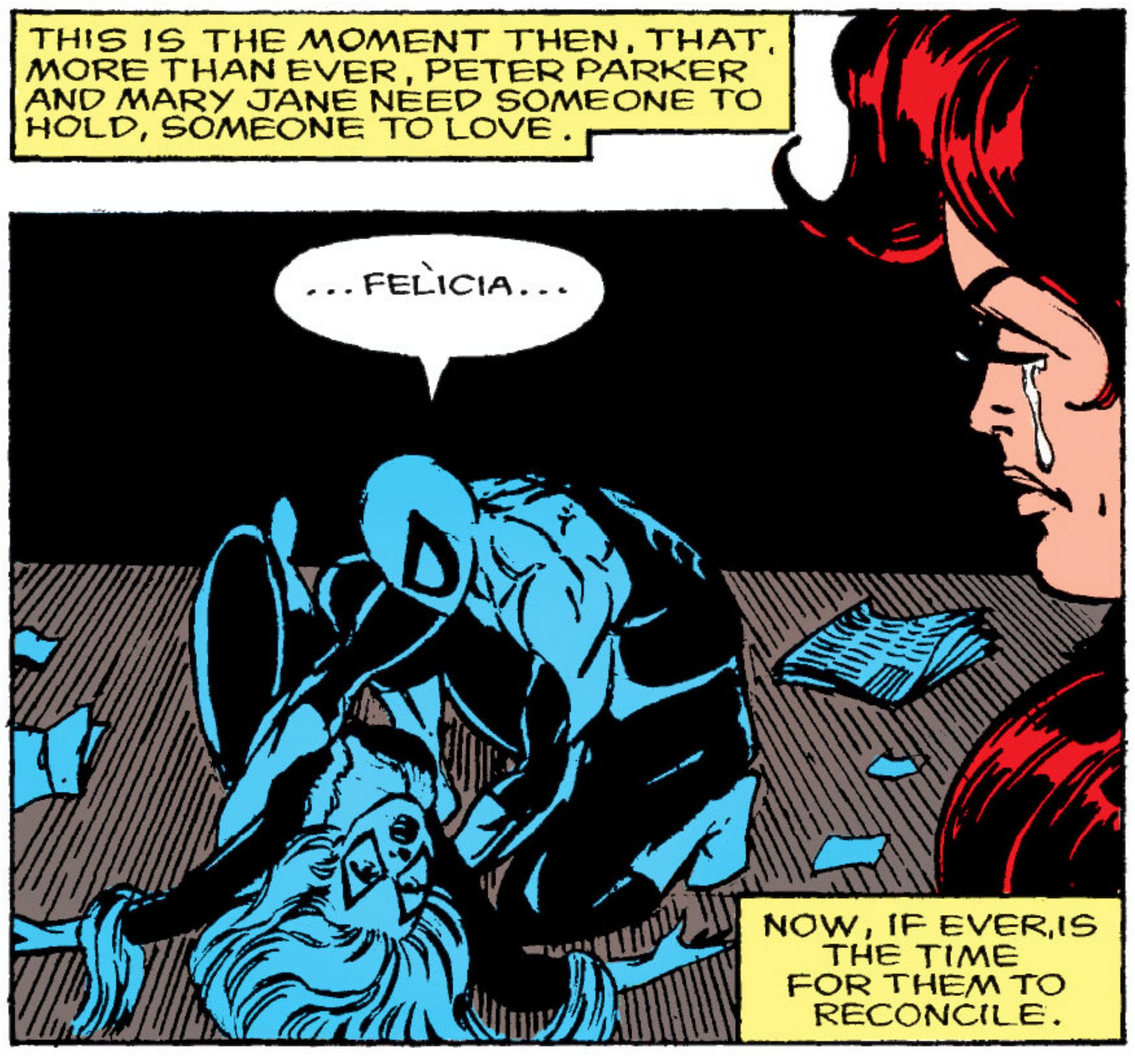

YOU'RE SAFE, NOW, MJ!

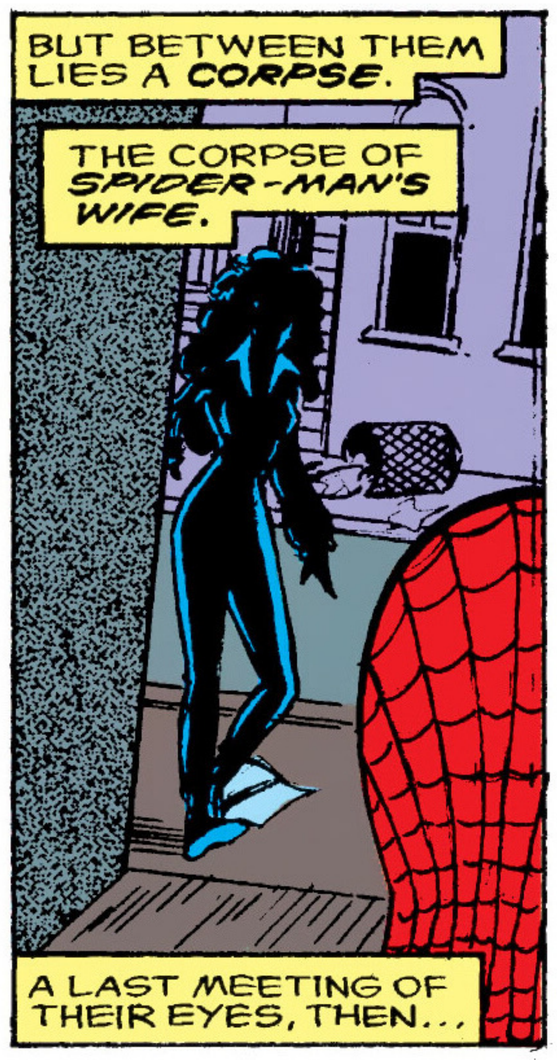
OH, MY GOD!

OH, MY GOD...



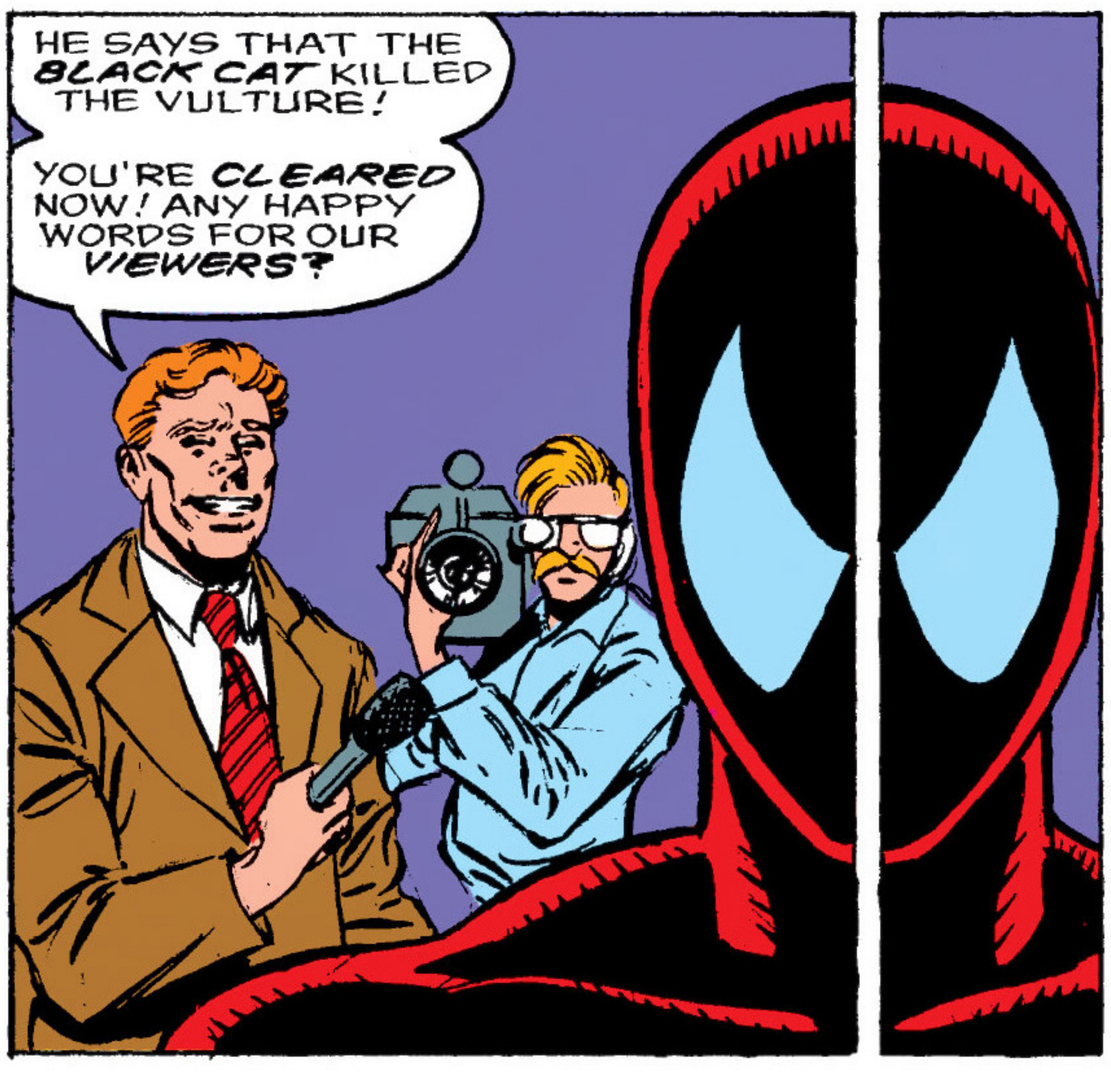

YOU FOOL! HOW DARE YOU SHOOT WITHOUT KNOWING THE ENTIRE SITUATION?!
HEY! MY REFLEXES'VE SAVED YOUR BUTT MORE THAN ONCE, LADY!
SO I MADE A MISTAKE THIS TIME--!
SHUT UP. BOTH OF YOU.
WE HAVE TO GET HER--
--TO A HOSPITAL.
NO...POINT, SPIDER. PALADIN'S... TOO GOOD A SHOT.
I GOT THE VULTURE... FOR YOU, SPIDER... MADE HIM... PAY...
NO MATTER WHAT YOU MAY THINK...IT HAD TO BE DONE... AND I DID IT...
I LOVE YOU, SPIDER...
FELICIA!


THIS IS THE MOMENT THEN, THAT, MORE THAN EVER, PETER PARKER AND MARY JANE NEED SOMEONE TO HOLD, SOMEONE TO LOVE.
...FELICIA...
NOW, IF EVER, IS THE TIME FOR THEM TO RECONCILE.

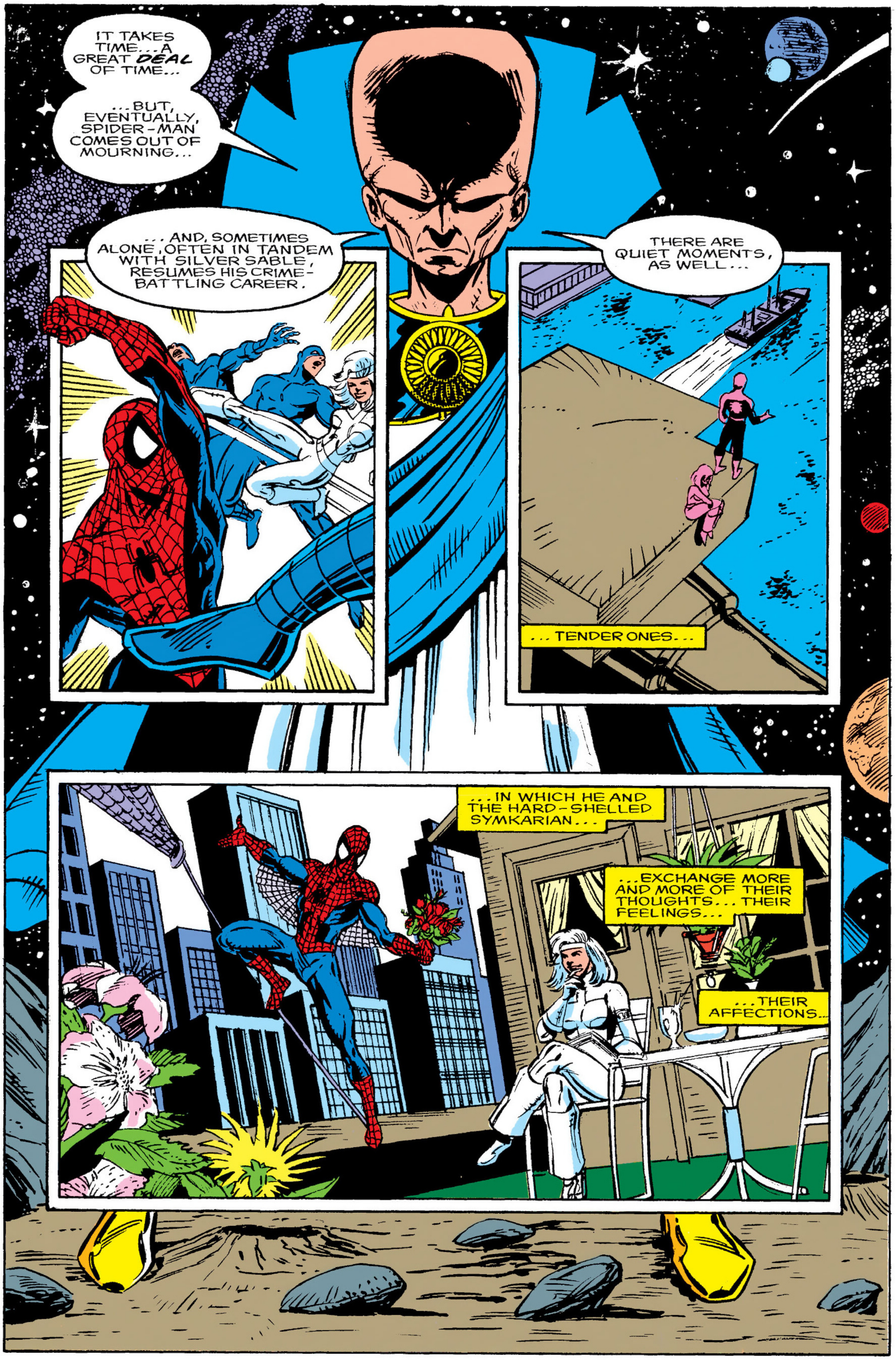

BUT BETWEEN THEM LIES A CORPSE.
THE CORPSE OF SPIDER-MAN'S WIFE.
A LAST MEETING OF THEIR EYES, THEN...

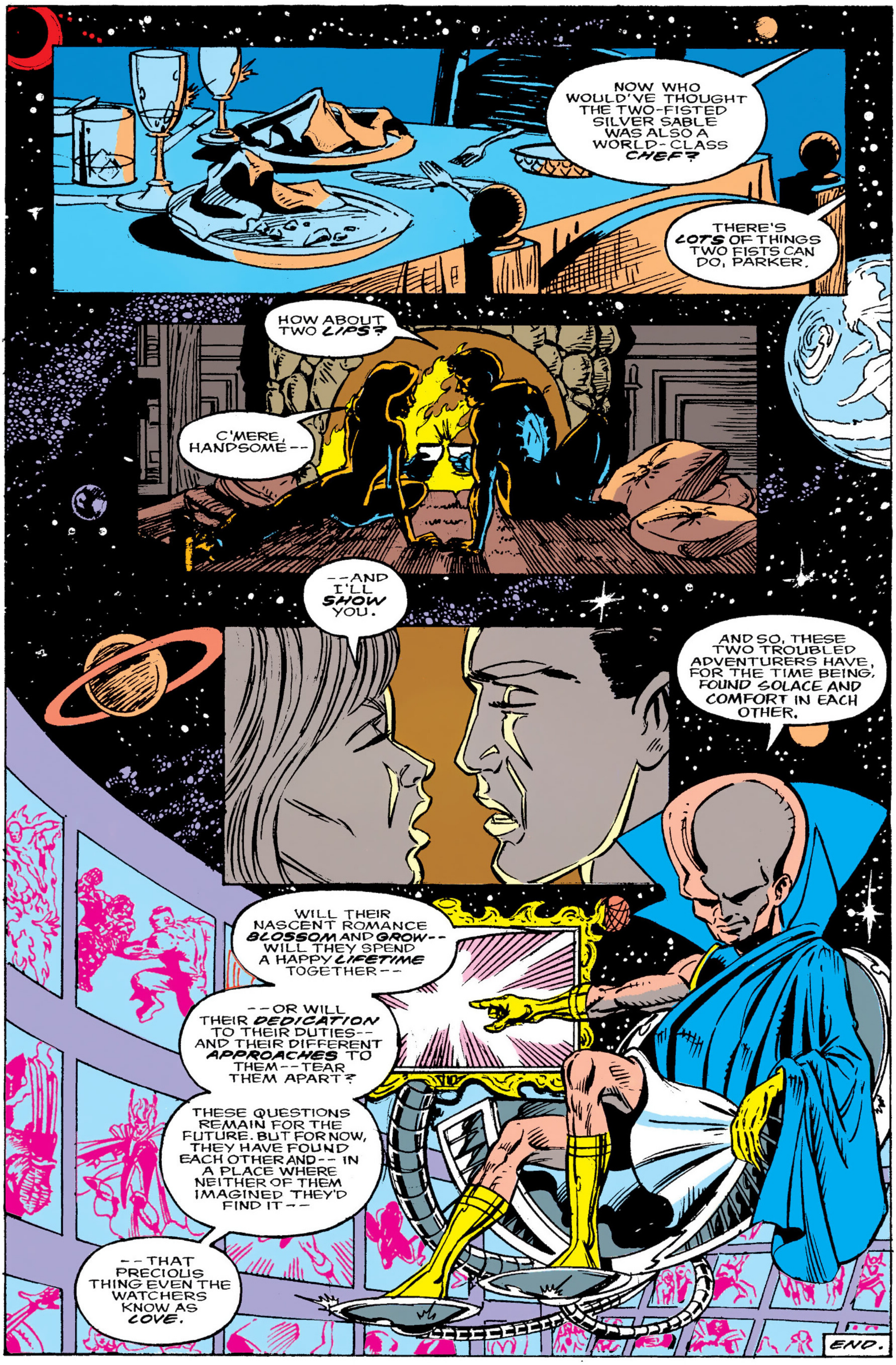
...AND MARY JANE WATSON IS GONE.

SPIDER-MAN!
--I'M FROM CHANNEL THREE! THE INJURED GUARD AT RYKER'S -- HE CAME OUT OF HIS COMA!
RESCUE


HE SAYS THAT THE BLACK CAT KILLED THE VULTURE!
YOU'RE CLEARED NOW! ANY HAPPY WORDS FOR OUR VIEWERS?

SPIDER-MAN WILL HAVE A STATEMENT IN THE MORNING, GENTLEMEN. FOR NOW...
...GET LOST.


IT TAKES TIME...A GREAT DEAL OF TIME...
...BUT, EVENTUALLY, SPIDER-MAN COMES OUT OF MOURNING...
...AND, SOMETIMES ALONE, OFTEN IN TANDEM WITH SILVER SABLE, RESUMES HIS CRIME-BATTLING CAREER.
THERE ARE QUIET MOMENTS, AS WELL...
...TENDER ONES...
...IN WHICH HE AND THE HARD-SHELLED SYMKARIAN...
...EXCHANGE MORE AND MORE OF THEIR THOUGHTS... THEIR FEELINGS...
...THEIR AFFECTIONS...


NOW WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT THE TWO-FISTED SILVER SABLE WAS ALSO A WORLD-CLASS CHEF?
THERE'S LOTS OF THINGS TWO FISTS CAN DO, PARKER.
HOW ABOUT TWO LIPS?
C'MERE, HANDSOME--
--AND I'LL SHOW YOU.
AND SO, THESE TWO TROUBLED ADVENTURERS HAVE, FOR THE TIME BEING, FOUND SOLACE AND COMFORT IN EACH OTHER.
WILL THEIR NASCENT ROMANCE BLOSSOM AND GROW-- WILL THEY SPEND A HAPPY LIFETIME TOGETHER--
--OR WILL THEIR DEDICATION TO THEIR DUTIES-- AND THEIR DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THEM--TEAR THEM APART?
THESE QUESTIONS REMAIN FOR THE FUTURE. BUT FOR NOW, THEY HAVE FOUND EACH OTHER AND-- IN A PLACE WHERE NEITHER OF THEM IMAGINED THEY'D FIND IT--
--THAT PRECIOUS THING EVEN THE WATCHERS KNOW AS LOVE.
END.